

Jerry Lewis Fooled • Hollywood's New Mr. Big • Bryant Gumbel Bumbles

SPY

Were We Nuts?!

A Tidy, Five-Day Gulf War?

Cocaine and Sex Nothing but Fun?

\$750,000 One-Bedroom Apartments?

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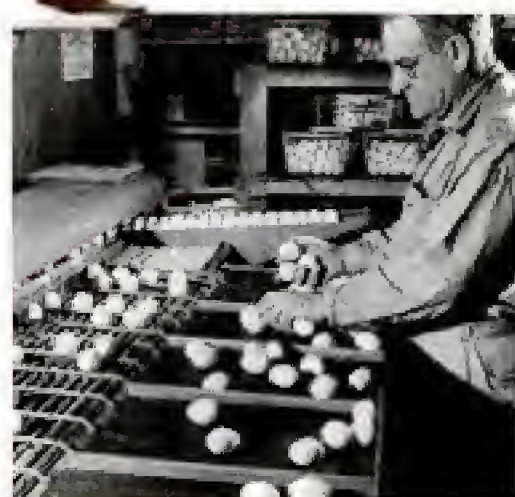
John Malkovich Andie MacDowell

*Stylish,
selfish
and broke.*

*They lost
everything
and found
each other.*



the orchestra starts playing, and some son of a bitch climbs out of the orchestra pit with a stage."—General Norman Schwarzkopf on the ability to plan precisely for war



U

h-oh: a spring war

U H - O H : A SPRING WAR WAS NOT PART of the plan. Now Ramadan is under way, buds are on the trees, mid-season replacements are on TV, and *still*, 100,000



sorties and a fair number of U.S.-bound human-remains pouches later, victory remains undeclared. Colin Powell's face seems not quite so fresh anymore. Videotapes of successful smart-bomb detonations are now indistinguishable from one another. Genuinely entertaining collateral bits of war news (Algerian parents eager to name newborn sons Scud, a squad of Alabama National Guardsmen imprisoning a photojournalist as a possible spy until he could name the governor of New York) are too few and far between. And the prohibition

on home-front frivolity—it is inappropriate to seem too happy about winning an Oscar, it is inappropriate to write so much as a gossip column without including some tie-a-yellow-ribbon mawkishness—seems more and more disingenuous. Even the advertising industry is paralyzed by the enforced earnestness. "Commercials need to be seen in the right environment," says Richard Dale, an executive with Deutsch Advertising. "A war is just *not* an

upbeat environment." Exactly. We're sure that if the fighting doesn't wind up soon, our own fascinated, ambivalent acquiescence is going to turn into anguished disillusionment and then, by summer, into full-bore cut-and-run rational-

izing. But wait, we forgot—this isn't another Vietnam. No, it's Vietnam sped up tenfold: half a million troops in place and reporters complaining about ham-fisted Pentagon restrictions before the shooting started, big protest rallies the first weekend, merciless B-52 carpet bombing and a George-McGovern-for-president movement the second week, American commanders caught telling lies and U.S. ground troops killed by friendly fire the third week. Brigadier General Pat Stevens IV swore to reporters that no Marines had joined the fight to recapture the Saudi town of Khafji; an hour later the same reporters saw tapes of Marines in combat at Khafji. "I don't think he intentionally wanted to lie," an Army spokesman explained. Our British allies, bless them, don't seem to slip so easily into dissembling and jargon. Asked about enemy maneuvers across the border in Kuwait, British group captain Niall Irving simply confessed ignorance. "There's no evidence of retreat; there's no evidence of massing for an attack. To be

Yes, it's choreographed—and what happens is a bayonet and starts chasing you around the



honest about it," he said, "the picture is really rather confusing." Given the same facts—Iraqi tanks and men running hither and thither—a U.S. military officer may be confused, too, but he *responds*, and he indulges in vivid metaphor to boot. Lieutenant Colonel Dick White, an American, said it was "like you flipped on the light in the kitchen late at night, and the cockroaches started scurrying, and we're killing them." As long as we're the people and they're the roaches, who says this war can't be an upbeat environment?

Upbeat and, like cans of Raid, not free: now that Desert Storm has lasted more than a month, the experts' consensus is that it will cost us between \$200 million and \$400 million daily. Depending on which way you look at the cost-benefit equation, it's a relative bargain at around a dollar per U.S. citizen per day or a very pricey \$1 million per dead Iraqi.

At least for Dan Quayle, if not for the rest of us, there is an extra benefit: he gets to appear in serious-looking photographs with the president and the Cheney-Powell junta—for Quayle, the ultimate upbeat environment. "Just as Bush became less goofy by being there in the Reagan years," a White House-connected Republican explained to *The New York Times*, "the same thing is happening here."

When the government blows a few hundred million a day to liberate Kuwait and rehabilitate Quayle, cost is barely an issue. Citicorp announces its intention to cut costs by \$1.5 billion—just a few days' worth of war, at Desert Storm rates—and there are headlines. The war makes the recession seem puny; the recession makes the war seem... well, like an upbeat environment, grand and can-do. "All large companies get sloppy," said John Reed, Citicorp's chairman and suddenly capitalism's *ex-fair-haired boy*.

If Citicorp can lop \$1.5 billion off its expenses by laying off battalions of nobodies with a fainthearted *mea culpa*—*Hey, so we goofed. Everybody's guilty; give us a break*—then it's no wonder that Steven Romer, the Manhattan lawyer who just absconded with \$25 million of his clients' money, was so breezy about the whole affair. After he disappeared, Romer sent notes to his clients in which he apologized in a John Reed-ish, arm's-

length sort of way: "Your money is no longer available, I'm sorry to say."

To us it looks like a whole new way to finesse all sorts of unpleasant explanations. Next-of-kin notifications? *Sir—your wife, Staff Sergeant Cheryl Bemis, is no longer available, I'm sorry to say.* Deglasnostification? *Citizens of Vilnius: Your civil liberties are no longer available, we're sorry to say.* (Or, in Lithuanian: *Jūsų civilinės teisės nebegalioja, labai gaila.*) Like old-school morticians, the Soviets have always had a knack for putting a good face on nightmarishness: nothing better embodies both neo-Stalinist backsliding and quasi-free-market boosterism than the new Ukrainian plan to turn Chernobyl into a tourist attraction—radioactive, yes, depopulated, yes, but potentially a very upbeat environment, foreign-visitor-wise.

Just as the Chernobyl scheme was being floated and Baltic independence was being discouraged, the U.S. advertising agency BBDO Worldwide, which keeps an office in Moscow, approached the KGB with proposals for an ad campaign to spiff up its image—to "dissociate itself from its embarrassing history," in the words of the ad agency. "I am, of course, personally interested," a spokesman for the prospective client said. However, he added, "we [at the KGB] tend to think that the best advertisement is our own work." See? Even a totalitarian security apparatus can be an upbeat environment.

So can Shakespearean tragedy: there's a special video accompaniment to Mel Gibson's *Hamlet* for use in schools. As Mel himself says in his on-screen preface, cretin to cretin, "I mean, it's a great story. It's got some great things in it. I mean, there's something like eight violent deaths." Sophomore English: thanks to modern marketing, one more upbeat environment in the making.

If *Hamlet*, stepping out of character, sounds like a giddy American teenager, it makes some twisted postmodern sense that when wise, steady Marcus Welby steps out of character, he becomes an irresolute, self-destructive fool. Robert Young tried to kill himself

by connecting a hose to his car's exhaust pipe; when the engine wouldn't start, Young called in a tow truck to get the car going, and the mechanic foiled the suicide.



Speaking of problematic cars and distinguished-looking older men, John DeLorean is now 66 and, he says, a full-time philanthropist and inventor. Among his current projects

is what he calls a "new type of egg." A *new type of egg*: how profound, how simple, how quaintly crazed, how thrillingly improbable—how downright *nineties* of this quintessentially seventies man. And speaking of aging seventies guys who fancy themselves mavericks and dig happening chicks, Geraldo Rivera aired a TV show about the problems of fat people. He had himself fitted out with prosthetic fat and, being a classy guy, posed for a *National Enquirer* story. "I refused to look in the mirror until it was finished," Geraldo told a reporter. "Then I was horrified. I recognized myself, but *I wasn't at all sexy or dashing.*"

If Geraldo is ordinarily sexy and dashing—and, strictly for purposes of the following scientific discussion, we must assume he is—it means he causes other people's pituitary glands to secrete oxytocin. Scientists have recently discovered that a good deal of human bliss, Geraldo-related or otherwise, is a function of a particular pituitary hormone. Oxytocin is what encourages mothers and fathers to nurture their children, it's what puts people in the mood for sex, it's what makes people who've just had sex content afterward, it's what makes people who never have sex want to cuddle. One natural substance that does all that: how profound, how simple, how quaintly crazed, how thrillingly improbable. Even if the war and the recession do not end on schedule, even if the Soviet Union violently disintegrates, even if Robert Young and Geraldo Rivera fail to work out their respective self-esteem problems—if we can just manage to achieve pituitary self-mastery, an upbeat environment is still possible: in the spring, our fancy lightly turns to thoughts of oxytocin. ♪

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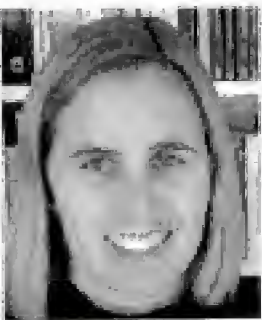
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JOHN CONNOLLY, a co-author of last spring's *Forbes* exposé of Donald Trump's shaky finances, takes the story a giant step farther in this issue, revealing that Trump's finances have *always* been laughably unsound. Although he has never been governor of Texas, Connolly was a plainclothes detective in the New York City Police Department from 1965 until 1976. He is working on a book about organized crime on Wall Street.



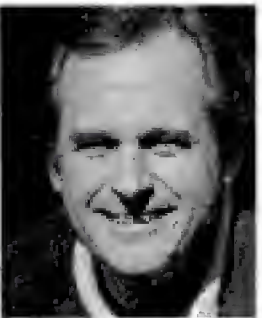
Since she became SPY's Washington correspondent in the spring of 1989, **ANDREA RIDER** has had her life threatened over the telephone, her legs fondled by a delinquent congressman and her sleep interrupted by FBI agents dispatched to her home at the behest of Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke. Yet for all the unpleasantness she has endured, Rider re-

CONTRIBUTORS

mains resolutely, inexplicably eager and cheerful. In this issue she leafs through David Duke's pseudonymously written sex manual.



PRINCESS THEKLA of Hungary is the brainchild of an accomplished prankster who, in addition to duping several VIPs into accepting the princess's spurious million-dollar bequests, has supplied SPY with the photo at left, which depicts either (1) Thekla as she appeared when young or (2) the disconsolate girlfriend of said prankster.



MICHAEL WITTE has illustrated articles in our special Washington and L.A. issues as well as this issue's Hungarian-princess prank. His work appears regularly in *Time*, *The Atlantic*, *Fortune* and *The New Yorker*, where his drawings of Eustace Tilley—the magazine's stiff-collared, butterfly-spotting mascot—enliven the listings section. "Sometimes I let the relationship between [Tilley] and the butterfly get a little antagonistic," Witte says. "Like a married couple." ☛

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DEAR EDITORS In spite of your writing (and I use the term loosely), Queen Noor of Jordan is still bright, beautiful *and* a queen ["Snow White and the Sovereign Dwarf," by Harriet Barovick, February]. You claim she is anti-Israel — is there an Israeli leader who is *pro-Arab*? You have done a good job of Arab-bashing in writing this article. Ms. Barovick must be a very bitter and jealous female to have done such a hatchet job on a young lady who has brought nothing but credit to her country and her family. I also do not see where she even interviewed Queen Noor — this is an attack on a lovely lady whom she never even met! Then again, Noor is better off not meeting such a slanted "writer." By the way, I assume all the men in your families are six feet tall? And I hope Ms. Barovick herself has a perfect figure. Does she?

Name withheld

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Our notions of what it means to bring credit to one's country and family must differ. As we reported, Noor travels abroad incessantly — by one account she spends only one month a year in Amman; her extravagance helped cause riots in Jordan in 1989. A wide spectrum of views ex-

Classics! (For more on the Merrick-Goldberger-Rich-Witchel-Gelb-Segal affair, see last month's Times column.)

DEAR EDITORS **B**asta Kraut-Bashing! Your sophomoric diatribe against the Germans in December ["Finally, a Solution to the Fatherland's Image Problem," by Art Levine and Sheila Kaplan] goes too far. Sure, Helmut Kohl is an *Arschloch*, and his kind will always try to gloss over the past. But your satire placed all Germans in his category. How would you like it if the European image of Americans was based purely on Bush or, worse, Quayle?

Marc Ellingstad

Madison, Wisconsin

DEAR EDITORS **A**s you'd predicted, when Simon & Schuster announced they'd made a mistake in buying *American Psycho*, Bret Easton Ellis's petulant whine was revved up to the volume only achievable by the true literary castrato [Books, by Todd Stiles, December]. On a November broadcast of

NPR's *All Things Considered*, he bleated incoherently about censorship, research and SPY's report, which he said "verged on the hysterical." Thanks for an unflinching look at what passes for writing today.

Rachel Ewing-Pace

Kansas City, Missouri

DEAR EDITORS **P**erhaps Ellis's autobiography (no doubt being written at this moment) could recycle the title *Less Than Zero*?

Margot Lowry

Bloomington, Indiana

DEAR EDITORS **I**s there anything I can do to get you to hate me as much as you hate Ellis and Jay McInerney? I really need the publicity.

Emily Prager

(Random House author)

New York

Ms. Prager is a writer, and although the title and price of her latest book escape us, we admire her work too much for it to become a source of antagonism.

This message is being sent to you as Good Advice. The original is on a floppy disk in the vicinity of Union Square in New York City. The message has been around the office five times (six, counting the time it got attached

FROM THE



MAIL ROOM

accidentally to a galley). The good advice is now being sent to you. You will receive the advice within ten seconds

of reading this sentence, provided you read past this sentence. *This is no joke.* You will receive the advice in this paragraph. Send no money. Send copies to people you think need good advice. The advice is: Send no more chain letters (see "Chain of Foolishness," by Aimée Bell and Josh Gillette, December) to SPY as an entity or to any of its employees. Or else.

We often hear from people who claim to read every word in every issue of SPY, cover to cover. We will henceforth think of them as "Fragaszies," in honor of William J. Fragaszy of Marietta, Georgia. Fragaszy seems to be the only person, including our proofreaders, who actually waded through the Statement of Ownership on page 83 of the December issue. In it we inadvertently claim a total distribution of around 5,000 copies and report that of those 5,000 copies, some 145,000 are distributed free each month. This is obviously a mistake. (One hundred forty-five thousand free copies? You must be thinking of — what was it? — 7 Days. Or the old *Details*.) The curious thing is that Fragaszy's brain apparently made the adjustment automatically, because he read the statement the way it *should* have appeared: 5,000 free copies. So why was Fragaszy writing, if not to correct our figures? Well, he wants to be one of the 5,000. "What a crowning achievement," he writes, "in an otherwise insignificant life!" Insignificant? We're sure there are many, many Fragaszies out there who, as soon as they finish reading the photo credits, will disagree.

Curtis E. of San Francisco has taken time out of his busy schedule to complain that we "may not be running enough references to the insect world" in SPY. We were afraid of this. "The

LETTERS TO SPY

ists in Israel (ask Yitzhak Shamir whether Shimon Peres is "pro-Arab"); in any case, Noor's anti-Israel sentiments seem perhaps more than just ideological. Harriet Barovick does have a perfect figure, and if it is relevant to you that Noor is "beautiful," it is relevant to us that Hussein is wee. Finally, Noor declined our requests for an interview.

DEAR EDITORS **T**he usually scrupulous J. J. Hunsecker missed several crucial steps in his coverage of the Frank Rich-Paul Goldberger dustup [The Times, February]. At Yale Goldberger wrote a review of Erich Segal's *Love Story*...in the shape of a heart! Did producer David Merrick subscribe to the Yale journal? Or was Goldberger behind Merrick's heart-shaped Times ad [about the romance between Rich and his colleague Alex Witchel]? And what about Rich's review of the movie *Love Story*? Admirers of the classics know that revenge is a dish best eaten cold. Go ask Orestes.

Name withheld

Los Angeles, California

And what did Erich Segal teach at Yale?

world could not exist without insects," he writes, and our heads begin to throb. He effectively guaranteed one more insect reference than usual this month by enclosing 15 or 20 tiny plastic ants. (Every time one of us unfolded his letter, some ants disappeared into our sleeves, so the exact number of ants mailed may never be known.) Curtis E., *this is your insect reference.*

SPY was among the first to rally 'round Donald Trump with some constructive help when news of his split with The Ivana first hit ("SPY Plays Love Connection With New York's Bachelor of the Year," by Michael Hainey, September 1990). Readers will perhaps recall that one Emma T. was among the half dozen hopefuls pictured (she was the one who used the word *money* 100 times in her essay, though some readers may remember her for entirely different reasons, some of them having to do with her lace-and-satin *bustier*). In any event, she sent us a postcard in December inviting us to watch her appearance on *To Tell the Truth*. So we lingered a little longer in our bathrobes that Thursday morning and watched. No mention of SPY. No mention of Trump. Just the erroneous report that Emma belongs to Mensa. If your March issue arrived late, you know whom to blame.

J. J. Solari of Burbank says he "laughed out loud in many places, and in one place for 4 minutes and 39 seconds, at Ned Zeman's article about people dressing up in cloth animal costumes" ("American Kabuki," December). That's very good—but shy of the record. Legend has it a beautifully realized Zeman simile back in '88 had one reader going for a full seven minutes.

"Is John Brodie still alive (or at least intact) after writing 'The Gambino Group 1990 Annual Report' [November]?" asks Dave Kliman of Roslyn, New York. Sort of. John entered a Parodist Protection Program and will be conducting all his business under a new identity for the next, oh, 50 years or so. We can't say more. Okay, just one little hint: *muttonchops*.

A reader has taken exception to George Tonelli Jr.'s letter to SPY (see December) in which he has some unflattering things to say about the ▶



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DEAR EDITORS **L**ast fall I received the "Netherlands" chain letter ["Chain of Foolishness," by Aimée Bell and Josh Gillette, December]. Four days later I received my first issue of SPY — the very issue in which the article appeared — as a new subscriber. It works!

Or does it? I broke the chain (I was worried Art Buchwald would sue, claiming it was based on an idea of his).

John Riley
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

DEAR EDITORS **H**ow did Bell and Gillette accomplish the Herculean task of keeping track of all those hundreds of letters and who had sent which letter to whom? It seems impossible — the chain crossed three continents!

Eric Clara
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Bell and Gillette tell us that for as long as they can remember, mail has been an almost daily feature of their lives, so they were well qualified to deal with all those letters. The vanity of the correspondents also helped: by sending copies of all the previous letters in the chain each time they sent the letter on, they were — with several degrees of separation — able to associate with people much more famous than themselves. (Incidentally, recent arrivals at the postal system's swinging cocktail party — "Mmm, these stamps are delicious" — include Marlin Fitzwater, Harry Reasoner, Margaret Tutwiler, Peter Guber, Shelley Winters, Teri Garr, John Candy, Sam Donaldson, Diane Sawyer, Al Neuharth, Hugh Downs, P. J. O'Rourke and Lainie Kazan.)

DEAR EDITORS **A**s a longtime personal correspondent of Mary Norris's ["A Friend Writes," December], I take exception to your characterizing her handwriting as "crabbed." I question whether the notes attributed by SPY to her were in fact her work. Ms. Norris's penmanship is usually sprawling and occasionally unreadable but never "crabbed."

Mary Beth Richlowsky
Cleveland, Ohio

To recap the lively debate that ran in this space last month: no, it wasn't Mary Norris's handwriting in the notes, but, according to the letter sent by Mary's mother, Mary does have a crabbed hand. This matter, we think, may now be considered closed.



naked models in an ad for a certain fine restaurant. The reader who has taken exception is not just any reader but the "middle butt" in the offending ad. "My notorious ass has already been banned from the Plaza hotel by Ivana Trump, and I've been featured in *Playboy's* 'The Year in Sex,'" writes Adrienne Crombie of Hoboken, New Jersey, with understandable pride.

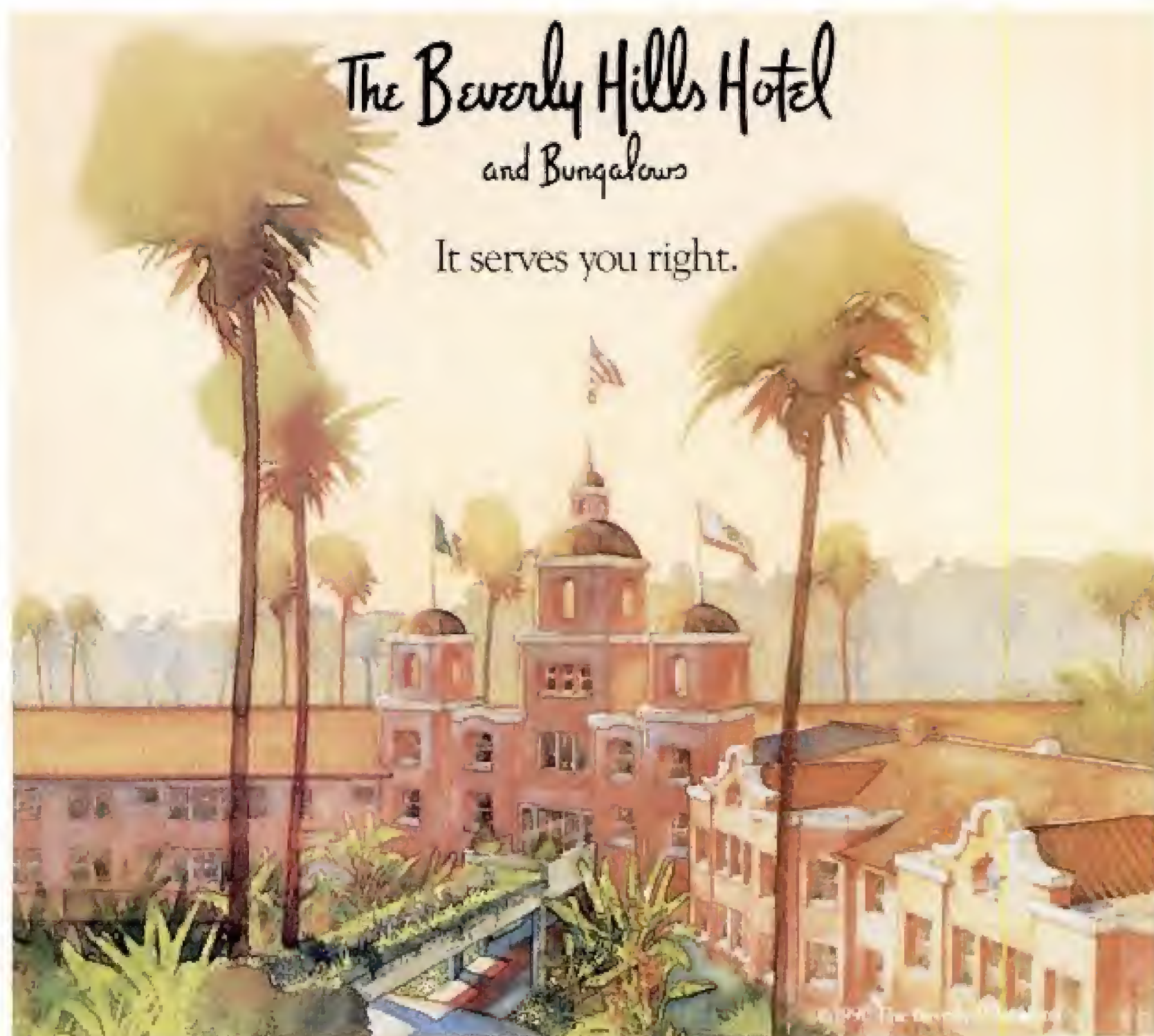
"I recently stopped by the Burkina Faso embassy in Ottawa," writes Michel Gauthier of Hull, Quebec. "I asked them for any printed material relating to their country, in the hope of finding out how the capital is really spelled." The Burkina Faso embassy in Washington, D.C., has also heard from a SPY reader: Lee Mark Salawitch of Baltimore, who was partly responsible for precipitating this controversy (see this space, September 1990), got on the phone and extracted a spelling from a Mrs. Moloua. Since both embassies gave the same spelling, we can assume it's correct. If you've been following this, you'll remember that the four contenders were

- (a) Ouagadougou
- (b) Ougadougou
- (c) Ouagadougou
- (d) Ouagoudougou

The correct answer is (c) Ouagadougou. We had rather been hoping for (d), but never mind.

Susan Kaufmann of Union, New Jersey, claims she doesn't intend to start "another Halbfinger-type controversy" but then goes on to wonder whether the David S. Shukan who wrote us regarding *Rotisserie League Life* (this column, February) is the same one she hasn't seen since a homecoming game at their old high school at which he boasted of knowing Brooke Shields at Princeton. Well, we just don't know. His letter, as far as we can recall, concerned itself entirely with *Rotisserie League Life*—and so have we, it seems, for nearly a decade now.

Still, it could be worse. The nubbins mail continues to pour in (an old comic strip called *Nubbin the Shoeshine Boy* sent in by Batton Lash of Brooklyn; a photo of Nubbin's Convenience Store in Roby, Texas, sent in by Pat Legate of Ponca City, Oklahoma), as do countless ▶



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DEAR EDITORS I am shocked and disgusted by the injustice of your attack on the hand of Mary Norris. I can testify to the quality of her writing in two orthographies, English and Greek (for she is a great philhellene). The hand of Mary Norris has always, in my view, entirely fulfilled the ambition of Prometheus when he devised the technology for the humankind he felt "like shapes in dreams muddled everything in confusion": "I discovered for them the combining of letters, / As a means of remembering all things, the Muse's mother skilled in craft."

Charles E. Mercier

Vassar College

Poughkeepsie, New York

We'll thank you to keep your personal life out of the pages of our magazine, Mr. Mercier. (Orestes, "Herculean" and now Prometheus—who knew how deeply SPY had penetrated the philhellene market?)

DEAR EDITORS **A**re you guys going soft on us? Over the years we've come to know and love the relentless sarcasm of SPY; then you hit us, in the November Webs column, with "Andy Lack, the executive producer of *Face to Face*, is...the creator of the not unwatchable *West 57th*." What kind of sycophantic pandering is this? *Has someone been paid off?*

McLean Brice, 06936-021

Federal Prison Camp

Maxwell Air Force Base

Montgomery, Alabama

You know, Mr. Brice, sometimes we attribute to others qualities we dislike in ourselves.

DEAR EDITORS **H**enry Alford is wasting his time as a mere journalist ["Don't Let the Bedbugs Bite," October]. We have some 600 apartments in Manhattan and the outer boroughs, and I know that many of them could benefit from his talents as an interior decorator. Call us, Henry. We'll offer you a real job arranging bedroom furniture, not just writing about it.

Dee Staff-Nielsen, president

City Lights Bed and Breakfast

New York

Henry Alford replies, "I accept, but I'd like to warn Ms. Staff-Nielsen that I have an absolute passion for the rich, warm hues of Tuscany and the lake region."



examples of "Separated at Birth?" ripoffs. Thanks for those, and for all the anagrams. Time and space prohibit, et cetera. Also attention span—ours. Just a few comments, however. First, we're happy to have provided at least two columnists—David Brooks in the Nashua, New Hampshire, *Sunday Telegraph* and Beverly Orndorff in Virginia's *Richmond Times-Dispatch*—inspiration for their pre-Christmas columns, enabling them, no doubt, to focus their energies on eleventh-hour shopping. Brooks and Orndorff are evidently *SPY Junior* (February) readers, and our scientific exposé "No, Virginia, There Isn't a Santa Claus" spoke to them particularly—why else would both apparently have based their December 23 columns on it? (Thanks to J. P. MacAleese and Robert Lett Jr., respectively, for those clippings.) Second, the legendary "Elvis's Weight on the Planets" conversion table (by Fleming Meeks, December 1987) continues to be discovered and reprinted without our permission; *USA Today* at least gave it an original spin—they did Buster Douglas's weight on the planets instead. Finally, to "A Friend," who sent us the excellent look-alikes page from a 1964 issue of *Horizon*, thank you—we've acknowledged this forerunner before. And anyway, we were outside playing stickball and crawling into culverts that whole summer and so could not possibly have seen the issue.

One L.A. reader, incidentally, feels we "haven't taken the 'Separated at Birth?' phenomenon far enough." Tal Parsons suggests that over time, some celebrities might actually become other celebrities: "For example, within 30 years Madonna will not only resemble but will in fact be Shelley Winters. For the disbelieving I offer the following simple experiment. Step 1: Get a copy of either of Ms. Winters's 'books.' Step 2: Wherever the name 'Tony Franciosa' appears, cross it out and write in 'Warren Beatty.'" We believe you. We're just too busy shaking toy ants out of our sleeves to test the theory.

J. M. Richardson of Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay, Ontario, informs us that someone was onto the concept of "Logrolling in Our Time" ▶

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DEAR EDITORS **F**irst you cite figures on antigay violence to establish you're not antigay [The SPY 100, October]. Was the feel-good sermon that followed intended seriously?

It would be a better world if people weren't ashamed to come out of the closet, if the news media didn't abet hetero masquerades, if sexual preference mattered to no one.

What a revelation for your queer readers! So why is "outing" on The SPY 100 when *homophobia*, by your own admission, is clearly one of the most appalling and pervasive blights ever waged on humanity, and one enjoying a huge revival?

Mark Richardson
Boston, Massachusetts

DEAR EDITORS **L**ast April you ran "Beardysomething" [by David Kamp], in which *thirtysomething's* Ed Zwick denied that the characters' abundant facial hair symbolized anything. This winter, a character was reintroduced (from the previous season) as a love interest for Ellyn. The character, Billy, had *shaved off his beard*. In fact, his hairlessness became a topic of conversation. Ellyn says to him, "Most people who have beards are hiding something, like a weak chin." Coincidence?

Pamela Pfiffner
San Francisco, California
Thank you, Ms. Pfiffner, but you exaggerate our influence. Zwick no doubt made up his own mind on this one, and figuring out what a TV producer is thinking several months before he does is not really such an achievement.

DEAR EDITORS **W**hile reading an article in the October 6, 1990, *TV Guide*, I was suddenly struck by the similarity of one passage to something I'd read in SPY (this is the only time I've ever run across a passage in *TV Guide* that reminded me of SPY):

Sunday Dinner: Norman Lear's first comedy in six years stars Robert Loggia ("Big," *Mancuso*, *FBI*) as a 56-year-old self-made man who finds new meaning in his life when he marries a 30-year-old environmentalist attorney....

Could this possibly be SPY's own rejected Pitch No. 6 from your June 1989 article

"Desperately Seeking Seriousness" [by Leah Rozen], about Norman and Frances Lear? The article informed us that 66-year-old self-made man Norman Lear (*All in the Family*, *Maude*), after endlessly recycling his own life into hit sitcoms, had shed his wife Frances and found new meaning in his life by marrying a 42-year-old psychotherapist. So, does art imitate life, which, these days, at least, imitates satirical New York monthlies?

Douglas Marsh
Pasadena, California

Like Ms. Pfiffner, you flatter us, Mr. Marsh (and by the way, may we point out that Pasadena is only a six-and-a-half-hour drive from San Francisco and that, with your similar interests, good taste and lack of any obvious perversions, you and Ms. Pfiffner would have quite a lot more going for you than certain philhellenes we could mention?). Life does not imitate satirical magazines; rather, like the Delphic oracle in ancient Greece, we merely prophesy the course of events.

DEAR EDITORS **I** was intrigued by all the hype about your magazine, so I purchased several issues at the newsstand. However, I stopped buying them a couple of months ago. I realized you would never know that I had stopped being a reader, and why, unless I told you so; thus I am writing to you. I know I represent millions of people.

I do not like to read obscenities and vulgar slang. At first I thought you were just using them in quotes (which isn't much better), but then some of your articles used those words as though they were normal (which they are not!).

Along with those words, you entertain abnormal ideas. This is dangerous!

I now realize your magazine is one step up from *Playboy*, which isn't saying much, so I don't buy your periodical anymore! It's not a family magazine.

Why not rethink your policy and watch your circulation go up?

C. Redmond
Covina, California
Ah, go fuck yourself.

SPY welcomes letters from its readers. Address correspondence to SPY, The SPY Building, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. Typewritten letters are preferred. Please include your daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. ☛

even before Howard Kaplan. That someone was—yes—Erasmus of Rotterdam. In *The Praise of Folly* (c. 1510), Of Rotterdam describes authors “flattering one another back and forth with epistles dedicatory, commendatory verses, and mutual complimentary allusions.” Faced with this evidence, we find ourselves reluctantly agreeing with Professor Richardson’s conclusion that “satire, however well and justly directed, is ultimately ineffectual in rectifying the manners and morals of men”—but only as regards the plague of mutual complimentary allusions. And even so, we don’t plan on taking Kaplan of Manhattan off the case.

Many questions from Terri Nakamura of Seattle. We’ll address a few of them: We no longer comment publicly on Taso Lagos. Yes, we used to publish 12 times a year, and before that 11, and before that 10. Now it’s 10 again. This gives us time to work on SPY books and SPY TV shows (the ones that bring so much joy to SPY’s Seattle readers) while continuing to lead the reckless, high-profile, party-mad lives others expect us to lead. We’ll publish a photo of The SPY Building as soon as they get around to changing the name on the front (but it really *is* called The SPY Building—ask any cabbie). Finally, we don’t know for sure what a “typical” SPY reader is, although we are convinced that he/she earns more than we do. Maybe we should conduct an informal demographic survey right here. If we listed all of Ms. Nakamura’s proposed survey questions, we’d go mad tabulating the results. Let’s just pick one representative question:

(a) Do you have children or pets?

Yes or no will do. And no names, please. ☺

C O R R E C T I O N S
In December’s “Chain of Foolishness” we gave undue credit to Patchett Kaufman Entertainment for the NBC television series *Alf*. The show was indeed created by Tom Patchett (along with Paul Fusco), but as part of Alien Productions. And in February’s Industry column we incorrectly described Matsushita; it is a public company. ☺

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THE USUAL SUSPECTS



S. SEAGAL



M. MANTLE



J. SILVER

THE FINE PRINT

by Jamie Malanowski

AT LEAST THERE'S NOTHING THAT SAYS, "MY PARENTS WENT INTO SPACE AND ALL THEY BOUGHT ME WAS THIS STUPID SHIRT"

Some people say that NASA's manned space program is no longer practical or affordable, that the whole shuttle program is a good-for-nothing boondoggle. Well, we have examined the official manifests of 34 shuttle flights, and we say, *Not so*. Boondoggle? Not by federal standards. Good for nothing? Hardly. At the least, the shuttle has proved to be a perfectly good vehicle for hauling flags of various sizes into space and returning them to earth, where they can be handed out to astronauts, government officials, contractors and well-connected citizens as very special mementos of man's quest for knowledge.

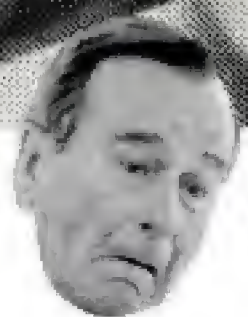
A select list of the flags that have been hauled into space by the shuttle: 71,651 American flags; 87 sets of the flags of the states and territories; 67 sets of the flags of the member nations of the UN; 117 NATO flags; 25,113 NASA flags; 99 European Space Agency flags; 1 presidential flag; 2 vice presidential flags; 2 secretary-of-Defense flags; 2 flags of the deputy secretary of Defense; ►

DESPITE HIS NOVEL ENTRÉE into show business—(1) Become **MIKE OVITZ's** aikido instructor; (2) Become CAA client; (3) Star in own movies—**STEVEN SEAGAL** has been tolerated by Warner Bros. because his practically identical, high-body-count action films (*Above the Law*, *Hard to Kill*, *Marked for Death*) generate modest profits for the studio. The cash flow he brings in apparently atones for the martial-arts star's pathological ego and his tendency to mutter about moonlighting as a hit man ("Yeah, I used to work for the CIA—and I still do some contract jobs," he told one colleague). But Seagal's behavior during the making of his most recent movie, *Out for Justice* (which he wanted to call *Price of Our Blood*), may prompt Warners to reconsider its five-picture deal with him. Having declared in all seriousness that he wanted to play parts more along the lines of **DANIEL DAY-LEWIS's** in *My Left Foot*, Seagal tried to soften his character—a sensible impulse, given that he has put on substantial muscle-masking poundage and now requires brown shoe polish to conceal his receding hairline—by personally writing and inserting several long, rambling monologues into the film. The crew also was obliged to endure the on-set presence of Seagal's personal herbalist, whom the star called in to check camera shots. The movie's relatively steep budget (\$25-million) and relatively minimal bloodshed have Warners executives worried they'll lose money on it. Seagal, who surrounds himself with bodyguards and keeps a huge knife on his desk for "killing people," may for once be justified in his paranoia.

SAFELY ENSHRINED in the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame, **MICKEY MANTLE** enjoys social vices without fear of recrimination: he boozes prodigiously, ogles bimbos and besmirches his legacy. And his weakness of character, appalling even by

ex-ballplayer standards, knows no bounds: when **MOOSE SKOWRON**, Mantle's old Yankees teammate and something of a legend himself, happened upon Mantle at a recent baseball-memorabilia show in Atlantic City, he good-naturedly asked the Mick for an autograph, for old times' sake. *No more, Moose*, Mantle snapped. *You gotta pay for it.*

WITH CELEBRITY COMES a certain *droit du seigneur*, or so **E. L. DOCTOROW**—the very talented but not particularly hunky author of *Billy Bathgate*—evidently likes to think. During his recent retreat at the MacDowell writers' colony in New Hampshire, Doctorow was approached by a young acolyte who, with the appropriate fawning, expressed her respect for his work. And that, alas, was that. A short time later, Doctorow stormed into the retreat's common dining area and commanded everyone's attention. *I'm getting out of this place*, he bellowed. *You people are the most unsexual group of human beings I've ever seen!* It is Doctorow's bad fortune that he plies his trade on the East Coast. In Hollywood, **JOEL SILVER**—the bearded, middle-aged, commercially successful but not particularly hunky producer of *Die Hard*—arranges his trysts West Coast-style, retaining the services of a female assistant whose job duties apparently include procuring young dates for her boss. Some months ago, when Silver was working on *Predator 2*—yet another of his overpriced, mindless, megaviolent bombs—the assistant bounded in triumphantly from 20th Century Fox's studio lot, shouting, *We scored! We scored! What a coup!* Later that day, she escorted in a young, blond, miniskirted woman who immediately sat down next to Silver, suggestively ate a banana, licked her lips, turned to the vile producer and said, *You have a lot of energy. I like that in a man.* Moments later, Silver and the fetching ingenue disappeared together.



ARE YOU GETTING YOUR .2 CENT'S WORTH OUT OF GEORGE BUSH?

A Tax-Time Public-Service Feature

Who among us hasn't rushed from a bank line to find a surly meter maid — *sorry, traffic enforcement agent* — idly watching a tow truck preparing to haul his automobile away? And in that brief moment before the winch engages, whose cry of "But I only left it for a minute!" has not been met by studied indifference? During such exchanges we often find ourselves thinking, if not speaking aloud, the tired chestnut "Hey, toots, I pay your *salary*! How 'bout a little respect here?" Sadly, though, when those salaries are divided by the number of taxpayers in the city or state (or nation) in question, it turns out we're probably getting more respect than we've actually paid for.

—John Brodie

Civil Servant	Amount of Annual Salary Paid per Taxpayer
Traffic enforcement agent (level one)*	$\frac{7}{10}$ of a cent
Sanitation worker (entrance level)	$\frac{3}{4}$ of a cent
Police officer (patrolman sixth grade)	$\frac{9}{10}$ of a cent
Bus operator (entrance level)	$\frac{1}{4}$ of a cent
Subway conductor (entrance level)	$\frac{7}{10}$ of a cent
City Council president (Andrew Stein)	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents
Mayor (David Dinkins)	4 $\frac{1}{10}$ cents
Governor (Mario Cuomo)	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cents
President (George Bush)	$\frac{1}{4}$ of a cent

*Sources: New York City Council Budget Office, Office of Municipal Labor Relations, Transit Authority, City Council President's Office, Mayor's Office, Department of Taxation and Finance, Governor's Office, IRS, White House

THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

1 flag of the undersecretary of the Air Force; 1,838 flags from the state of Kansas; 443 from Texas; 245 from Colorado; 150 from California; 134 from Utah; 104 from New York; 80 from Florida; 56 from Michigan; 52 from Indiana; 47 from Washington; 46 each from North Dakota and Tennessee; 45 from Virginia; 42 from Ohio; 40 each from Wisconsin and Massachusetts; 38 from Alabama; 37 from Ohio; 36 each from New Mexico and Pennsylvania; 35 each from Iowa and Oregon; 30 each from Maryland, New Jersey, South Carolina and Georgia; 29 from North Carolina; 26 from Mississippi; 25 from Minnesota; 23 from Puerto Rico; 22 from Hawaii; 21 from West Virginia; 20 each from Oklahoma, Alaska and Illinois; 15 each from New Hampshire, Kentucky and Arkansas; 12 from Montana; 10 each from Arizona, Idaho and Missouri; 7 from Montana; 6 from Rhode Island; 5 from Nevada; and 1 from Vermont.

The shuttles have carried 898 flags of Australia; 833 of Canada; 700 of West Germany (as well as 2 flags of Schleswig-Holstein, 2 flags of Koenigswinter, 2 flags of Fuerstentum, 1 flag of Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1 flag of Geislingen, 1 flag of Reutlingen, 1 flag of Baden-Wuerttemberg and 1 seal of Flughafen Koeln-Bonn); 643 of Indonesia; 534 of the Netherlands; 486 of the United Kingdom; 441 of France; 364 of Japan; 341 of Italy; 311 of Spain; 305 of Switzerland; 294 of Belgium; 290 of Denmark; 284 of Austria; 232 of Sweden; 82 of Mexico; 39 of Israel; 25 of Norway; 22 of the People's Republic of China (*I'm warning you, Deng — lay off those kids in Tiananmen Square or no more flags on the shuttle!*); 21 of Costa Rica; 17 each of Brazil and Argentina; 15 each of Colombia, New Zealand, Venezuela and ►

PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC FIGURES



Sofia Coppola spends Oscar night with family, friends and fans.

ILLUSTRATION BY DREW FRIEDMAN

THE SPY LIST

Ron Britten
Shaun Cassidy
Jimmy Connors
John Derek
Joe DiMaggio
Bernardo Faucher
Jack Gordon
Alan Hamel
Hugh Hefner
Peter Holm
James Newton Howard
John Jenrette
Don Johnson
Jake La Motta
Arthur Miller
Anthony Newley
Sean Penn
Peter Pulitzer
George Santo Pietro
Nikki Sixx
Paul Snider

THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

South Korea; 12 of India; 10 each of Luxembourg and Finland; 6 each of Thailand and Bolivia; 5 each of Peru, Pakistan and Algeria; 4 each of the Ivory Coast and Saudi Arabia; 2 of Liberia; and 1 each of Jamaica and Brunei.

The shuttles have also carried flags of the cities of Washington; Philadelphia; Los Angeles; Houston; Baltimore; St. Louis; Albuquerque; San Antonio; Grand Rapids; Salt Lake City; Orlando (as well as 15 sheets of paper with City of Orlando flags printed on them); Wrangell, Alaska; Cass City, Michigan; New Ulm, Minnesota; Salina, Kansas; Mississauga, Ontario; and Axel, the Netherlands. One shuttle carried Friendswood, Texas, flag material.

Continuing: the shuttles have carried 1 flag from the University of Kansas; 1 from the Kansas Aviation Museum; 21 from Kansas State University; 4 from the University of Michigan; 2 from Jackson Community College; 2 from the University of Tennessee; 7 from Stanford; 1 from Florida State; 2 from Virginia Polytechnic; 1 from Brown; 1 from Amherst; 1 from New Caney High School in Texas; 201 from the National Geographic Society; 2 from the Explorers' Club; 2 from the Hughes Corporation; 100 from RCA; 1 from the Indianapolis 500; 1 from the Texas Special Olympics; 1 from the Okaloosa County, Florida, Special Olympics; 2 POW-MIA flags; 1 Afghan freedom fighters' flag; and 114 flags of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Lest you get the wrong idea, shuttles can haul more than flags. Among other items, the shuttles have officially carried a University of Texas jersey; a Georgia Tech jersey; 3 Penn State jerseys; 4 Auburn jerseys; a doorknob from the state capitol of Wisconsin; ►

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Chapter One: Tips for
Aspiring Institutional-Food Salesmen

1. Tuna-based meals are perfect for establishments (e.g., nursing homes, wrestling camps) patronized by diners with low knife skills.
2. Members of the institutional-food industry are rarely moved by food descriptions that are fey or Japanese; this is a group obsessed by *bulk*.
3. On sample menus for prospective clients, never type *fruited Jell-O mold* such that *fruited Jell-O* appears on one line and *mold* on the next.
4. The well-versed food salesman is equally comfortable discussing portion control and aroma.
5. When trying to suggest elegance to the employee of an institutional kitchen, never underestimate the power of *chive-flecked*.
6. Food samples should be proffered only when the sales and menu-planning processes take place in a hygienic environment. A cornmeal-covered pork blend on a nonabsorbent wooden stick is, if sampled in an inappropriate setting, merely a cornmeal-covered pork blend on a nonabsorbent wooden stick; but if it is served in a microbe-free setting, suddenly...*a meal*.
7. When making follow-up phone calls, always refer to your notes ("Expressed interest in bulk dairy"; "Large vegetarian community"; "Became hostile and unpleasant during pork-blend demonstration").

—Henry Alford

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?



Tim Robbins...



and Michael J. Pollard?



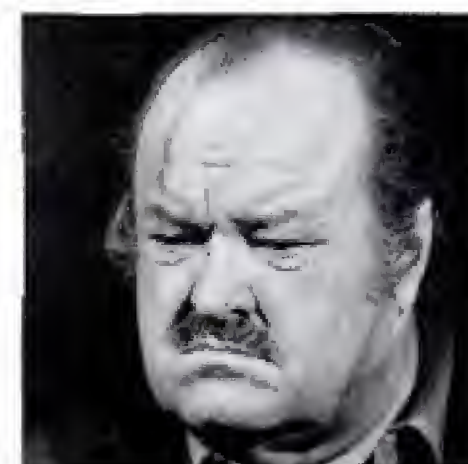
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and photographer
Herb Ritts?



Thurgood Marshall...



and William Conrad?

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—George Garrett on Richard Bausch's *Spirits and Other Stories*

"A triumph of the novelist's art."

—Bausch on Garrett's *Entered from the Sun*

"Daring, wildly ambitious, highly original, and triumphantly successful."

—George Garrett on Alan Cheuse's *The Grandmothers' Club*

"A capstone novel of a truly beautiful and distinguished series of books."

—Cheuse on Garrett's *Entered from the Sun*

"Overwhelming."

—George Garrett on Thomas Flanagan's *The Tenants of Time*

"A wise and lovely book."

—Flanagan on Garrett's *Entered from the Sun*

—Howard Kaplan

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THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

2 vials of seawater; 2 models of the Eiffel Tower; 3 hockey pucks; a basketball; a tennis ball; a softball; 4 baseballs; 3 footballs; 6 soccer balls; 25 golf balls; 1 tee; 850 THAILAND IN SPACE stickers; a piece of one of Malcolm Forbes's balloons; a piece of the Wright brothers' original airplane; a piece of a glider rib from the oldest glider in Australia (destroyed in the *Challenger* explosion); a USA-Uruguay friendship pin; a lifetime-membership certificate in the Lockport, New York, YWCA; a Pony Express belt buckle; a history of Paton, Iowa; a Radio Relay League pennant; 2 Dodgers pennants; 70 Redskins patches; a button from the Smokey Hill River Festival; 3 eagle feathers; a miniature replica of a Florida alligator; Ezra Cornell's wedding socks, from the Cornell University archives; a five-page description of the Washington & Lee University honor system; a package of tree seeds; a tuning fork; 7 baseball caps; a beret; 2 boomerangs; 3 Royal Doulton china plates; 10 HOUSTON PROUD lapel pins; a Harvard VERITAS banner; a paper seal of the city of Dearborn Heights, Michigan; a sheepskin bearing the Auburn University creed; a figurine of a lion; a letter opener; 3 reprints of a scholarly paper written by an astronaut; a photo of a bell on the DePauw University campus; a school letter from the Pullman High School in Pullman, Washington; 40 wings from Edsyn Inc.; 28 shields from Edsyn Inc.; 7 soldering tools from Edsyn Inc.; 85 Universal Studios patches; 17 poems from the Ambleside Primary School in West Midlands, England; an 1885 silver dollar; a Liberty Bell pin; a dollar bill for some of the guys at Hughes aircraft; 47 copies of the Constitution; a copy of *Ms.* magazine; a copy of *Ebony*; an afghan; a grindstone; and 4,522 Snoopy pins. ▶

IT'S 10:00 P.M. — DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR HOMO TRANSLATORS ARE?

Around the World with TV News Analysis

It's a Small World After All



The next time you tire of Robert Novak or Sam Donaldson or Fred Barnes yakking about current events, consider how you'd feel if you lived in Japan, where a disturbingly large number of the analysts on TV Asahi, one of the country's primary broadcasters, are utterly without experience in public affairs or journalism. In a kind of a news-program reverse on *What's Up, Tiger Lily?*, newscasters and guests review and comment on subtitled versions of CNN stories. It is enormously enlightening to hear their observations on a country they are in the process of purchasing.

Discussing the furor over *As Nasty As They Wanna Be*, the album by 2 Live Crew, Masahiro Nagakubo, a Sony employee, explained the meaning of the title of the song "Bad Ass Bitch" to Miyako Takagi, a college teacher. "It means a woman with a nice rear end," Nagakubo said. "Someone like you, Takagi-san."

Commenting on Florida's ban on thong bathing suits, Katsuya Konishi, a simultaneous interpreter, noted that "Americans are really dirty-minded.... Think of all the problems that would be caused by them getting sexually aroused at the beach."

When Hans Paul Verhoef, an AIDS expert

from the Netherlands, was denied permission to enter the U.S. to attend an AIDS conference after it was discovered that he had the disease, commentators wondered whether Verhoef's appearance prompted Customs officials to detain him. "He was kind of gay-looking," said Professor Takagi. "You mean the way he moved," agreed best-selling author Naoki Inose, striking a limp-wristed pose.

When Representative Barney Frank's relationship with a male prostitute was revealed, Sony executive Kimitaka Usami was moved to ask, "Why are there so many homos in the United States?"

After actress Rebecca Schaeffer was killed by a deranged fan, interpreter Konishi wondered why there were so many incidents in America of entertainers' being stalked. Because, artist-performer Ramo Nakajima explained, the country has a lot of "meat eaters."

"But aren't there are a lot of meat eaters in Japan?" asked Konishi. "There are more in America," said Nakajima.

Not all the observations were naive and ill-informed. After a story in which Ted Turner interviewed Fidel Castro, the commentator said, "Do you get the feeling that CNN was forced to put together that report?"

—James Bailey

Headless Body in Topless Bra

At least the Japanese analysts have to deal with foreign-language translation and an ocean separating them from their subjects. Right here at home, a segment of our own population struggles to make sense of current events.

For the past ten years or so, deaf and hearing-impaired TV viewers have been offered news broadcasts (both network and local) with "closed captions." With the relatively recent advent of "real-time" captioning (broadcast technology meets court stenographic equipment), typists now get the words to the screen mere seconds after they're spoken.

All of the following captions actually made it to the airwaves on ABC and PBS programs.

The arbitrators are weary of the bedroom [boardroom].

We had a lot of sex [success] and grew because of it.

Gary Hart raped his knuckles.

Pat Robertson breaches the gospel.

The Chinese are damned if they do and Democrat [damned] if they don't.

Ed Meese failed to protect White House dolts [documents].

Dukakis is a technocrat [technocrat].

The dick tasters [dictators] gathered today.

Anus conference [a news conference] was held by politicians.

For "The Ten O'Clock Nudes"...

The first bitch [pitch] is the best so you might as well whack it.

According to the shit [shit] filed by her attorney...

We went outhouse hunting [out house-hunting].

And once in Boston, on WGBH's *Ten O'Clock Nudes*, the eloquent Jesse Jackson was seen to say, *I don't want a title. I don't want a salary. I just want to surf* [serve]. Who can blame him?

—Sandy Leonard



Stomachs of the World Unite

RECESSION

PRIX FIXE DINNERS

recession timeline:

'91

'81

'74

'69

'61

'57

\$16⁹⁵

**RESTAURANT
FLORENT**

69 Gansevoort Street

(\$14⁹⁵ before 7:30pm)

*Choice of Appetiser
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(charcuterie)*

*Choice of Entree
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or Vegetarian*

*Choice of Dessert
Creme Brulee, Creme Caramel,
or Pastry*

Coffee, Decaf, or Tea

\$17⁹⁵

**RESTAURANT
BELLEVUE**

496 Ninth Avenue

(\$15⁹⁵ before 7pm & after 11pm)

THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

"AND FINALLY, SERGEANT, THAT'S MR. JARHEAD TO YOU!"

We've always been big fans of the Marine Corps — the sabers, the cool East Village haircuts, the rousing theme song, *Gomer Pyle, Major Dad* and, most of all, the sense of tradition. Of course, only a foolish organization remains bound by tradition when times demand a change, and the Marine Corps is anything but foolish. As proof that the old ways are changing, here's an excerpt from an official USMC order entitled *Recruit Abuse and Other Prohibited Activity During Recruit Training*:

"No person of this Command will engage in any activity designed primarily to harass or annoy a recruit; to cause any recruit to perform any act which is degrading; to cause any recruit to perform any unauthorized act which endangers a recruit's health or welfare; or to cause any recruit to perform any activity primarily for the amusement of others [cf. our forthcoming monograph, 1,001 Reasons Why SPY Is Not Like the Marine Corps]. Some examples of prohibited activities are... unauthorized exercises; assuming unnatural positions; consuming non-food products or excessive amounts of food or drink... inflicting pain upon themselves by running into objects... causing recruits to shower while partially dressed or in water which is uncomfortably hot or cold; to wash their hands in urinals or commodes; to be punished for errors through mock hangings or crucifixions; [to be] mocked for failure to pass tests; or use [sic] profane, vulgar or demeaning language towards recruits."

The manual stresses that these examples are not intended to cover all prohibited activity, and it specifically forbids touching recruits except for purposes of correcting physical errors or preventing bodily harm.

(Reporting by Jeff Hoyt) ☛

APRIL DATEBOOK *Enchanting and Alarming Events Upcoming*

- 1 The bearded poets C. K. Williams and Adam Zagajewski — the authors of *Tar* and *Tremor*, respectively — read selected works at the Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center. Other than attending vespers at a Unitarian church in the Pacific Northwest, we can think of no better way to spend an evening among dozens of 60-ish men in shawl-collar cardigans and clogs.
- 2 Ninth anniversary of Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands and, coincidentally, eight-month anniversary of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.
- 3 A hearty *Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!* to Helmut Kohl and Max

Frankel, both 61 today; both blockish and bespectacled; and both German-born overseers of large, alarmingly powerful and prosperous-but-fretful entities prone to racial insensitivity and excessive gothic typography.

4 Final performance of Radio City Music Hall's *Easter Extravaganza*. In

related developments, drugstores mark down chocolate bunnies by 50 percent; bookstores dismantle Beatrix Potter window displays; and stocks in companies that manufacture green shredded cellophane plummet.

7 Daylight saving time begins, 2:00 a.m. A plus for Garrick Utley fans, who have one less

hour to kill until *Sunday Today*.

14 Greek Independence Day Parade, Fifth Avenue. Angry lunch-counter patrons throughout the city demand to know why coffee refills are taking so long.

15 Income tax deadline. Dumb, reactionary discourse on whiny New Jersey radio call-in shows reaches a fever pitch.

20 Don Mattingly turns an exhausted, old-beyond-his-years 29; the Yankees against the Royals at Yankee Stadium.

22 The Film Society of Lincoln Center hosts a tribute to Audrey Hepburn. Newspaper previews make promiscuous use of the words *ageless*, *timeless*, *gamine* and *elegant*.



24 Film critic Stanley Kauffmann turns 75, which makes him almost as old as his employer, *The New Republic*, and could explain why he didn't care for *The Little Mermaid*.

28 Your last chance to catch the Museum of Modern Art's "British Photography from the Thatcher Years" exhibition. A must-see for aficionados of black-and-white portraits of West Indian rioters and dilapidated Yorkshire row houses. ☛



Walter Monheit's
BLURB-O-MAT

Capsule Movie Reviews by Walter "Dateline: The Copa" Monheit™, the Movie Publicist's Friend

ONE GOOD COP, starring Michael Keaton (Buena Vista) ☐☐☐☐

Walter Monheit says, "One good plot, one good star, one good movie! Stick to Kindergarten, Arnie — crime buster Keaton's all the cop we need! Bat's entertainment!"

TALENT FOR THE GAME, starring Edward James Olmos (Paramount) ☐☐☐

Walter Monheit says, "Put 'im in, Coach! Ed's Olmos-t in a league by himself! Stand and deliver, Oscar — we have a winner in this Talent show!"

BLUE SKY, starring Jessica Lange (Orion) ☐☐☐☐

Walter Monheit says, "Pack up the roadster and call in sick — nothing but Blue Sky in Oscar's forecast! As for Jessica — ooof! — well, temperature is rising, humidity is up, and visibility is good, I azure you!"

What the monacles mean: ☐☐☐ — excellent; ☐☐☐☐ — indisputably a classic



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ABC

CARPET & HOME

SEX AND THE SINGLE BIGOT

An Exclusive Fantasy Dream Date With David Duke!



With all the opportunity out there to meet the sexy, handsome man you want, it's really a bummer to sit all evening in Aunt Matilda's living room with Mortimer Upchucks." The author of this and other gems of advice for the lovelorn is not Linda Sunshine or Dr. Ruth Westheimer. It is David Duke. Yes, this Renaissance man—former wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, founder of the National Association for the Advancement of White People, Louisiana state legisla-

tor and likely candidate for governor—is also the author of *Finderskeepers*, a mating manual for women. This guide was published in 1976 by Arlington Place, a small house with Nazi affiliations. Duke wrote the book under the pseudonym James Konrad; a coauthor, Dorothy Vanderbilt, is credited, but Duke has never introduced her to the public. That seems a bit neat, given that he now credits her with writing the material most likely to be politically damaging. We think he's

being too modest. If we'd written anything that so extravagantly shouts, *I'm a product of the wide-sideburns seventies*, we'd want the credit. (By the way, Dave: do Klan gals dig fondue?) Alas, this classic volume is now out of print. But, happily, not unobtainable. Below are some choice excerpts. (In our helpful way, we have provided the questions.)

How can I meet guys?

"If you're in an office, bar, or park and you see a man you want to meet, and your car is nearby, you rush over, throw your keys in and lock the door. Then you go in with a look of desperation and say, 'Could you help me? I've locked my keys in my car, and I don't know what to do.'"

Should I flatter a guy?

"A standard rule for attractive conversation is to make your man feel very important...If a man tells you he is an insurance salesman, just say, 'I should have known that because of the nice way you talk.'"

Should a girl remove her

makeup before making out?

"If you have returned to your apartment with a sexy Don Juan...only an idiot would break the mood and take off makeup rather than make out with it on."

What should I say to a man when he starts talking to me about the death of his pet cat?

"If a man is talking about the death of his pet cat, you don't need to ask him how it looked after ten tons of firetruck ran over it. Instead, [ask] questions about how long he had the cat and how he acquired it, questions about the cat's behavior and why he liked it."

When it comes to dating older men, where should I draw

the line?

"You don't want a man who may be great in bed one night, but unable to recognize you on the street the next day because of rapidly advancing senility."

Do you know a good rationalization for having an adulterous affair?

"Often the married man is more capable of love than a single one. He has a steady diet of sex at home if he wants it; he has security and roots, and only now with you can some of his most creative courtship talents be unleashed... As strange as it seems, he has no fear of letting go his feelings for you because he is not afraid of the thing the unmarried man worries about—marriage."

How can I strengthen my vaginal muscles?

"Insert [a] vibrator into your vagina and then use the constriction of your vaginal muscles to push it out. After a very few days...you will find you can get quite proficient at it, and you will be surprised at the speed and force you can use to eject it."

Is it possible to develop my vaginal muscles too much?

"There's no need for you to develop your vaginal qualities to the point where you can pick up quarters or through muscular contractions smoke an entire pack of inserted cigarettes."

Can you suggest something special that will really please my guy?

"Lightly touching the [anal opening] in foreplay or intercourse can be extremely erotic. Some women occasionally place (carefully) one of their fingers in it during intercourse when body position makes it possible. Most men really enjoy such activity on your part during lovemaking."

Should I ever consider breast-reduction surgery?

"There's a lot to be said for small, firm sensuous breasts. Perhaps to your surprise, you will discover that not all men like huge-breasted women. And remember the old saying that anything more than a handful or mouthful is wasted away."

I'm thinking about hooking a man and then getting really fat. Any comments?

"Dieting and exercising before marriage or the creation of an intimate relationship and then not following it after the relationship forms could almost be categorized as dishonest."

Any special tips for achieving happiness with the Klansman—American Nazi—state legislator in my life?

"Whatever you do, don't joke about his inability to achieve an erection. Just act as if there's no problem." —Andrea Rider



AT THE SANTA-EASTER BUNNY DEBATES

"Buenos días."

"Guten Tag."

"Bonjour."

"Konnichi-wa."



Wouldn't it be nice if you could speak to anyone?

Well, almost anyone.

"Arf."



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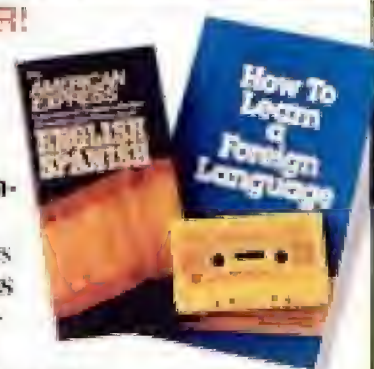
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"EEK! THERE'S A HAIRBALL IN THAT CADAVER!"

A Survey of What Grosses Out Professionally Jaded People

Not long ago, reclining in the dentist's chair and listening to the spit sink, we found ourselves marveling at the forbearance of Dr. Potter. How could this man bear to spend every day up to his wrists in other people's saliva? Then we got to wondering, *If this doesn't make Dr. Potter squeamish, what does?*

Name: Dr. Randolph Todd
Profession: endodontist
Routine Work



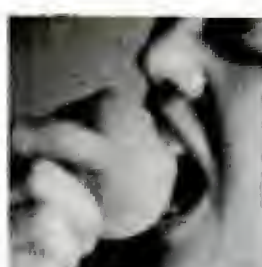
Activities: sucking the nerve tissue out of rotting teeth; filling in the holes with something that smells like burning chicken feathers
Object of Disgust: the silky edge on wool blankets
Comment: "I don't know why. It started when I was a kid"

Name: Emma
Profession: electrologist (Mario Badescu Skin Care)



Routine Work Activities: squeezing pimples; removing tiny mustache hairs from women's faces with an electric current while looking at them through a magnifying glass; quickly ripping hair out of the flesh around strangers' genitalia
Objects of Disgust: cleaning a hairbrush — even her own; also, the retching sound a cat makes when trying to get rid of a hairball
Comment: "Don't get me started"

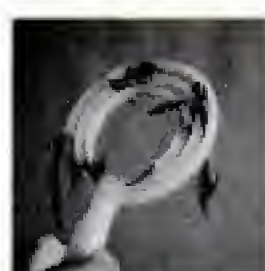
Name: Dr. Sandra Engelson
Profession: dentist



Routine Work Activities: capping excruciatingly sensitive nerve tissue with metal; injecting tiny, sharp needles into warm, moist

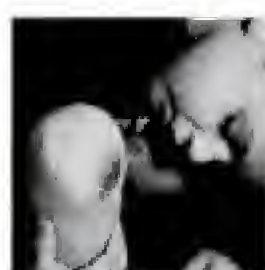
flesh; extracting old food particles from molars; ordering people to spit
Objects of Disgust: fuzzy fruit — peaches, apricots
Comment: "I get chills just thinking about biting into a peach"

Names: Pete and Eddie
Profession: butchers (Cuzins Meat Market, 520 Ninth Avenue)



Routine Work Activities: draining blood; cutting decapitated, disemboweled carcasses into convenient pieces
Object of Disgust: for Eddie — the sound the meat scraper (which scrapes bone dust off meat) makes when rubbed against the band saw
Comment: Pete — "Watch what happens to Eddie when I do *this*." [Screech of metal against metal] Eddie [diving into the back room] — "Noooo!"

Name: Dr. Chuck Ross
Profession: podiatrist
Routine Work



Activities: handling and treating sweaty, unclean, diseased feet
Objects of Disgust: the scraped knee or elbow of a child; also, "being confronted by something I wasn't sure of in the realm of a snake"
Comment: "Not too many

And what about urologists, podiatrists and all the other people who, on a daily basis, perform tasks that are — not to put too fine a point on it — really disgusting?

Warning: the following article contains material that may not be suitable for queasier readers. —Judith Newman

things would send me retching in a corner. But there's something about a child's scraped knee"

Name: Dr. Stephen Yu
Profession: resident in urology (NYU Medical Center)



Routine Work Activities: cystoscopy (inserting a lighted tube up the urethra and looking through it); rectal exams
Objects of Disgust: congealed fat on the top of chicken soup that has been refrigerated; rice pudding
Comment: "I'd rather look at

a person who's been cut in two from being run over by a subway car than congealed chicken fat — the texture...oh, God"

Name: Danny
Profession: embalmer and body dresser
Routine Work

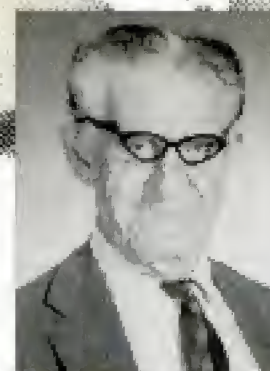


Activities: replacing blood with chemical fluids; prettification of the dead
Object of Disgust: watching someone chew paper
Comment: "I can drain a body, no problem, but you ever see someone moving a wad of paper around in their mouth? Now, *that's* gross" »



THE DEATH OF A SHOW BUSINESS LEGEND

Mr. Jack Fine (1990-91)



Last month, readers will recall, we introduced Jack Fine, the show business personal manager's show business personal manager, who in November and December delighted a few TV producers, if only briefly, by suggesting that some of the world's most distinguished actors were interested in appearing on some of the world's most pedestrian television programs ("Well, Why *Couldn't* De Niro Appear on *Doogie Howser?*"). We invented Jack, and we enjoyed him—or, as he would have said, *we lo-o-oved Jack, we adored him*—but after a while, frankly, he became a bit of a bother. His phone bills, his Apex Management office supplies, the fact that everybody in the office was calling everybody else *dear* and *darling*—it all became too much. Jack had had a wonderful career at SPY, but it was time to kill him, and on January 7, we did just that.

To inform the members of the entertainment community of our loss—and theirs—we paid for a death notice in *The New York Times*, which ran on page D20 on January 9, and an in-memoriam notice in *Variety*, which appeared on page 127 of the January 14 issue. *Variety* also published its own obituary of Fine, based on information in a press release we had sent. *Variety* runs its obituaries each week in rough order of importance

and celebrity—the week Jack Fine died, Richard Maibaum's obit came first (he wrote screenplays for 12 James Bond movies, after all), but Jack was no lower than twelfth place, ahead of 30 other, presumably real entertainment-industry figures who had passed away. Finally, we sent an item about Jack's passing to columnist Liz Smith, which she accepted as fact and reported.

We realized, however, that written words did not do justice to Jack, a man who was defined by his person-to-person skills. Only personal reminiscences could truly honor the memory of this truly great man and his truly remarkable accomplishments. Therefore, we ventured to the heart of Jack Fine's milieu, to a place where everybody would be a Jack Fine kind of guy, had Jack ever existed. On the evening of January 7, the very day of Jack's demise, we went to the New York Helmsley Hotel to attend the party that *New York Post* gossip columnist Cindy Adams threw for the 80th birthday of her husband, comedian Joey Adams. Some of the biggest names in the New York celebrity orbit had turned out for the occasion. With all that love in one room, we thought, surely some memories would start flowing. And they did. A transcript of part of the evening's conversation follows.

SPY: I'm wondering if you have any memories of Jack Fine?

Comedian Pat Cooper: No, I don't—uh, what was the name again?

SPY: Jack Fine.

Cooper: Oh, *Jack!* Are you kiddin' me? Yeah, what a nice man! One of the—

SPY: You knew Jack Fine?

Cooper: Oh, yes, *absolutely*. I didn't know him very... y'know, *intimately*, but I knew him—I knew *of* him. He was one of the finest men—

Comedian Freddie Roman: Who?

Cooper: Jack Fine.

Roman: Oh, *sure!*

Cooper: Y'know, he passed on....

Roman: [*Sadly*] I *kno-o-ow*, I know.

SPY: You knew him?

Roman: Absolutely. Sure.

SPY: And what remembrances of him do you have?

Roman: Fond.

SPY: He was with Apex Management—

Roman: I didn't realize that. Well, he was a lovely man.

Cooper: He *was* a lovely man. A good man. An honest man.

A fair man.... Really, I'm not being funny. He was a really honest man.

Roman: Absolutely.

JACK FINE

Jack Fine, 87, personal manager to theater and film actors, died Jan. 7 in Australia of heart failure.

He founded Apex Management Corp. and ran it for nearly 50 years.

Fine's career began at MCA, where his clients included Eddie Cantor, the Marx Brothers and the Ritz Brothers. In 1933 he left MCA to found Apex, signing stars like Betty Grable, Johnny Weissmuller and Jeff Chandler.

Although he retired from full-time work in 1982, Fine continued with Apex until he moved to Florida recently. He was in Australia on business. Fine's son-in-law, David Feld, will replace him as president of Apex.

Born in Minsk, Fine fled Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 at age 13. He grew up in Flatbush, Brooklyn.

Survived by a daughter, Estelle Fine-Feld, and a brother.

Variety 1/14/91

Liz Smith, Daily News 2/1/91

Chapel, Oyster Bay, N.Y.

FINE—Jack, of Coral Gables, FL and New York. On January 7, 1991, at the age of 87. Beloved husband of the late Rachel Fine. Devoted father of Estelle Fine-Feld and the late Morton Fine. Dear brother of Max Feinstein. Jack founded Apex Management Corporation in 1933, and served selflessly as the personal manager to some of the greatest stars in vaudeville and motion picture history, including Betty Grable, Johnny Weissmuller, Jeff Chandler and Sarah Edwards. He also worked with Eddie Cantor and the Marx Brothers, and helped Molly Picon break into theatre. His wise counsel, loving humor, energetic assistance and abiding honesty will be missed.

New York Times 1/9/91

them "Hawk"

We remember Jack Fine Friend, Manager, Mensch "He isn't really gone, he's just on another line." Apex Management and his loving family David Feld & Estelle Fine-Feld

Variety 1/14/91

A SAD MILESTONE in the world of show business: Jack Fine, personal manager to such golden greats of Hollywood as Betty Grable, Johnny Weissmuller and Jeff Chandler, passed away recently in Australia, far from his beloved New York. Jack founded Apex Management and ran it for 50 years before retiring. Early in his amazing career, Jack represented such legends as the Marx Brothers, the Ritz Brothers and Eddie Cantor. He was known for his unflagging optimism, expressed in his famous signature line: "Smile darling — somewhere it's opening night!"

SPY: How did you know him?

Roman: Just in passing, but always kind and pleasant. And good.

As it turned out, the guest of honor, Joey Adams, also had warm memories of Jack.

SPY: I'm wondering if you remember Jack Fine; he passed away this morning.

Joey Adams: Who?

SPY: Jack Fine.

Adams: Oh, sure, yeah.

SPY: Do you remember much about him?

Adams: No, not too much, but I knew him very well.

SPY: How did you know him?

Adams: Well, in the business, y'know, same business.

SPY: How long have you known him?

Adams: Since I was a kid, I don't know—a long time.

SPY: He founded Apex Management, is that right?

Adams: I think so, yes. But, y'know, I—it's all a blur....

When I stop to reminisce, I'll be able to remember.)

THE WEBS EAST



Bryant



Dick

A BRYANT SHINING LIE: WHY *TODAY* REALLY FAILED

While drums continue beating along the Euphrates, executives at NBC News must fondly be remembering the days when a major story spelled a ratings uptick for their *Today* franchise. But that was long before ABC's *Good Morning America* broke NBC's five-year hold on first place last winter and locally syndicated shows like Fox's *Good Day New York* started taking second. Now all *Today* can hope for from the war is a chance to catch up, maybe. The show is in this sorry position for one reason, and his name is Bryant Gumbel.

For some time, *Today's* biggest problem has been the defection of young female viewers—the prime target for television advertisers, particularly in the morning. The show has over the last few months made a number of major moves, all of which have had two things in common: they have made the problem with the young female audience worse, and Gumbel has had a hand in them. And not only has Gumbel helped exacerbate the alienation of female viewers, but he is also a problem himself. Although he is surely one of the most able broadcasters on television, Gumbel's Q score (the crucial measure of name-recognition and popularity with the American public) is now in the single digits—one point below that of his brother, Greg Gumbel, a CBS sportscaster, and seven points below Lorenzo Lamas's.

Figuring out what would appeal to young women shouldn't be too difficult—a young, good-looking man is one possibility that comes to mind. (Remember, this is infotainment.) Gumbel, however, would feel threatened by the presence of another smooth customer like

himself, so different tacks have been pursued. John Palmer was once *Today's* newsreader—but he made the serious error of wearing ties that Gumbel hated. Palmer was replaced by Deborah Norville—a young, good-looking woman. When Gumbel's old chum Dick Ebersol, then the senior vice president in charge of *Today*, moved to replace Jane Pauley with Norville (egged on, it is said, by the antipathy of his wife, Susan St. James, toward Pauley), Gumbel was not displeased. His feelings for Pauley can be summed up by his charming pet name for her—*cunt*, as in “Jesus, that cunt was really on Pluto today.” Naturally, the newsreader slot left open when Norville was promoted had to be filled, so last summer the show hired another young, good-looking woman, Faith Daniels. When Ebersol finally realized that this might not be the way to win back female viewers, he decided to hire a man—a goofy, bald, bespectacled man. Gumbel proposed the liver-spotted Joe Garagiola and lobbied hard for him. What about Bob Costas, you might ask, the bright, glib, likable sportscaster who substituted quite nicely for Gumbel for a week? It's not hard to understand why Costas hasn't filled in for him in more than a year. So a show that desperately needs to regain its young female audience now stars Gumbel, Norville and three hunky sidemen—Garagiola, Willard Scott and Gene Shalit. Gumbel's cock-of-the-walk position is safe.

It has been said that Gumbel's off-screen charm would lure back disgruntled female viewers if only he were allowed to bring more of it to the airwaves. Really? One of his favorite jokes to tell male staffers is “What's the definition of *eternity*? The time between when

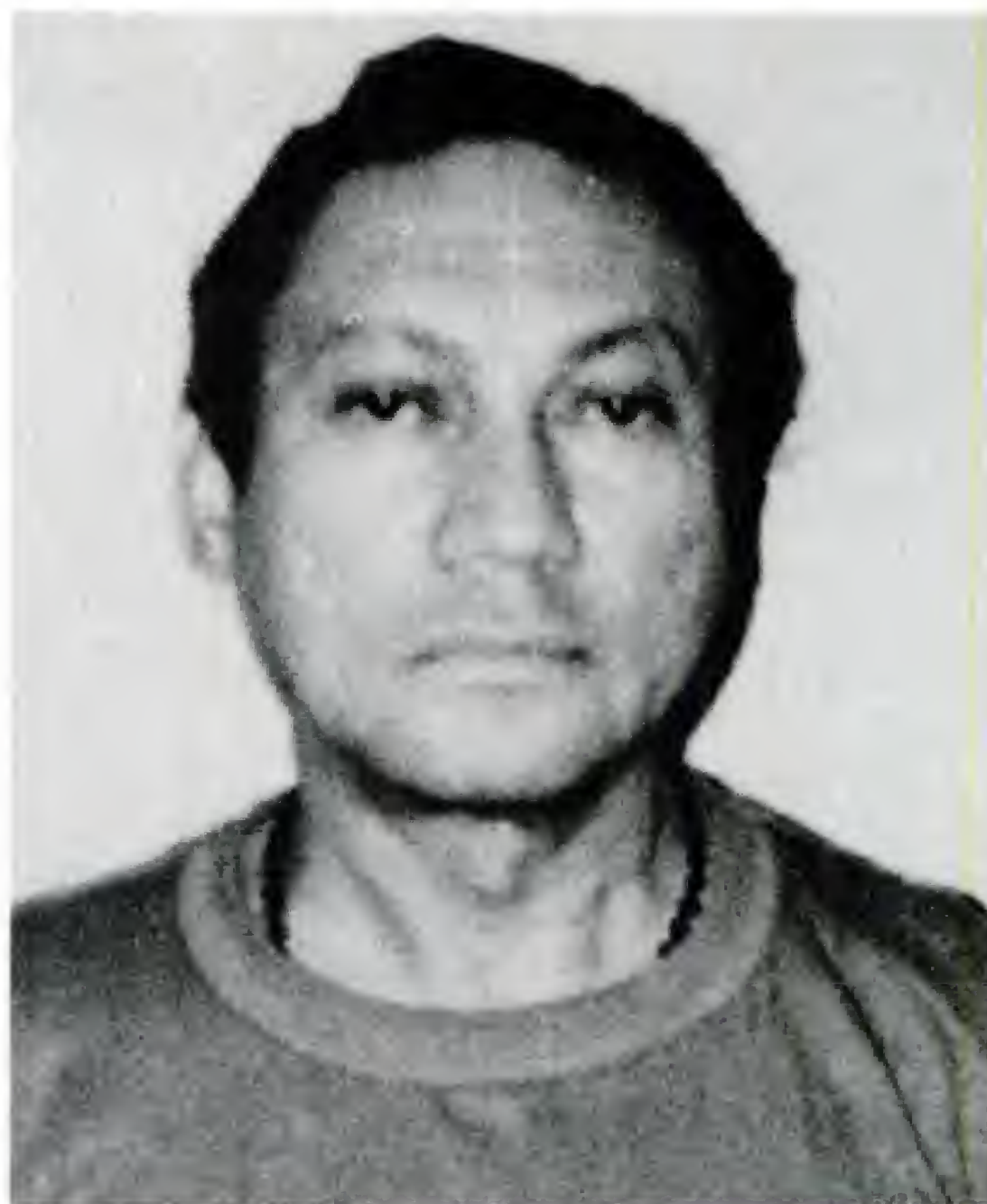
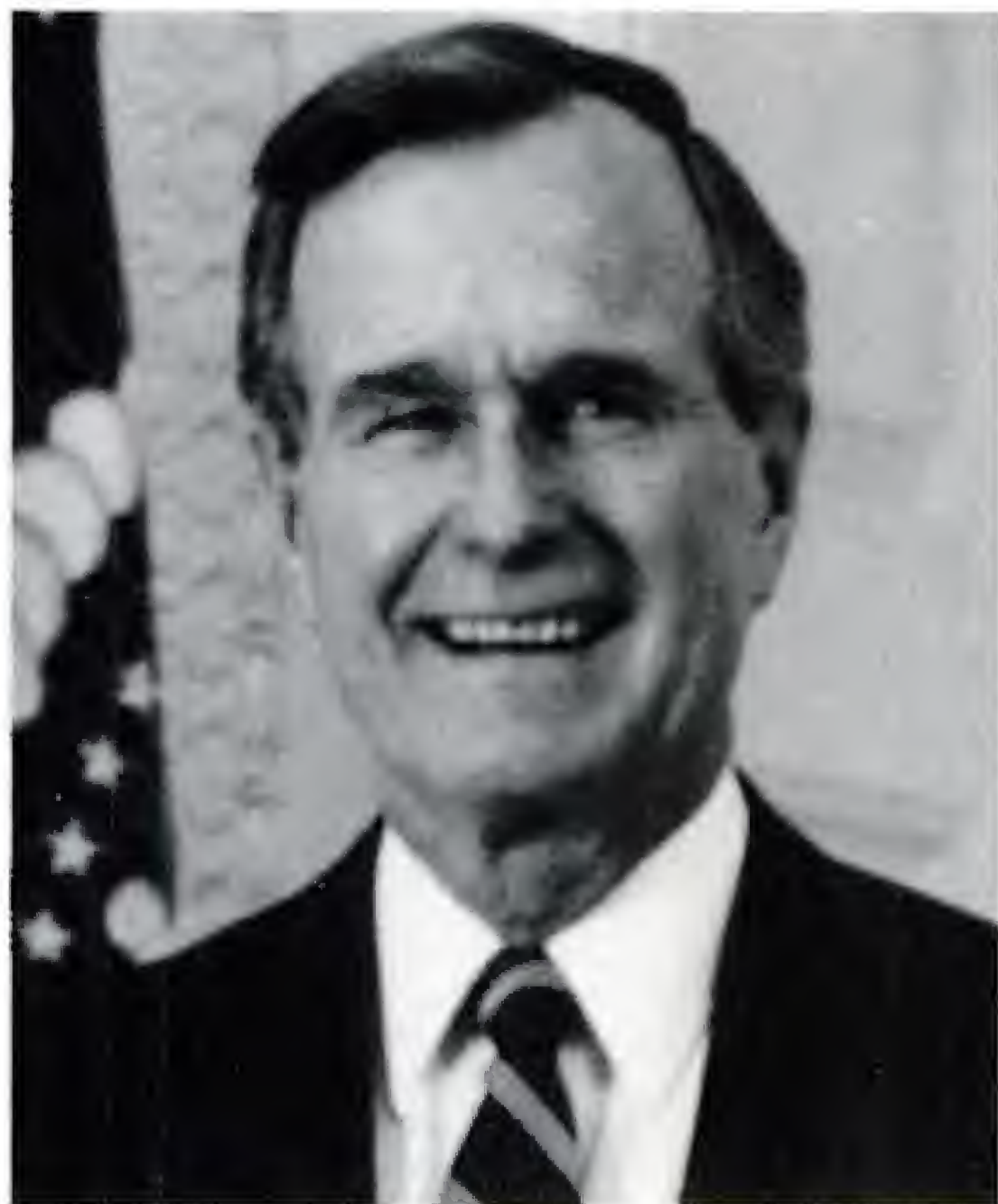
you come and she leaves.” But that, apparently, is just the kind of antediluvian artifact Gumbel is: in the past, producers at *Today* could always anticipate whether their anchor would be a fun guy or a grouch on the road when they found out whether his wife of 16 years, June, would be accompanying him. Gumbel, they claim, was more manageable when he would ditch her and bring along his very close personal friend Bunny in her stead.

Over the years, Bunny has grown to be a well-known fixture inside the *Today* family. Not only did she help Gumbel relax while covering events like the 1984 New Hampshire primary and the Democratic convention that year, but her visits to his old seventh-floor Rockefeller Plaza office on at least one occasion created a genuine scheduling challenge for his secretary when June Gumbel dropped by the office unannounced.

As skillful as Gumbel is, NBC News executives must be wondering whether he's worth all the trouble as they face the prospect of renegotiating his \$2 million contract this summer. A new face like Costas might bring viewers back. In addition, Costas is a trouper. When he and Gumbel were anchoring the Seoul Olympics in 1988, Costas uncomplainingly donned the cheesy NBC Sports jacket, while Gumbel told his associates, *They want me to wear the fuckin' jacket, forget it.* Joseph Abboud whipped up some new outfits for him. Given past practices, the person who is much more likely than Gumbel to be sacrificed is the show's executive producer, Tom Capra. If he were the hero in one of his father's movies, Capra would be saved by the little people. But the movies are not like real life, and television is not like either one.

—Laureen Hobbs

Gumbel's
popularity
rating with the
American
public is
below Lorenzo
Lamas's



Quick. Who killed more civilians in Panama?

It wasn't so long ago that the world was divided into black and white.

There were "friends of the United States" and "enemies of the United States."

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31

THE INDUSTRY



Sparky



Mike

THE
KATZENBERG
MEMO: 28
PAGES THAT
SHOOK THE
WORLD

By now, almost everyone in the business has been faxed a copy of Jeff "Sparky" Katzenberg's 28-page "internal"

Disney memo detailing the current ills of the entertainment industry, an abridged version of which ran in *Variety*. (I, for one, was amazed that my old chum Sparky could write 28 pages of *anything* without 5 different writers and 44 pages of studio suggestions and ideas for alternate endings.) But for those fortunate enough to live outside the Pac-Tel cellular dialing area, or who don't have a fax machine or get *Variety*, here's a recap (of the real one, not the parody that went out over the same fax machines and also ran in *Variety*): *Movies cost too much; stars cost too much; agents are too powerful; script bidding wars are insane; executives at movie studios are creatively bankrupt; the Japanese can't make movies with heart; and given the chance to do it over again, we would never have made Dick Tracy.*

On its surface, the memo is somewhat disingenuous, since Katzenberg, like other studio chiefs, has relied on agents to package his films, and Touchstone has engaged in bidding frenzies in the past. (Remember the studio's seven-figure bid for *Filofax*?) And Katzenberg himself has paid millions for the likes of Warren Beatty, Kim Basinger and Alec Baldwin—not to mention his recent signing of Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, the "avarice twins."

What, then, is this memo really all about? At the moment, there are at least four schools of thought among Disneyologists, all of which start from the premise that the document was written primarily to convince outsiders of Disney's—and especially Katzenberg's—

corporate sobriety.

The first theory holds that Katzenberg is at odds with Michael "I'm the Tall One Next to Mickey" Eisner over the future of the studio and deliberately leaked the memo around the time Eisner's \$10.5 million 1990 bonus was announced, in order to embarrass him.

The second school supposes that Katzenberg wrote the memo in response to *Premiere's* February article detailing Basinger's and Baldwin's childish tantrums on the set of *The Marrying Man*. Sparky doesn't like bad press, and he likes it even less when stories suggest that a Disney project is out of control, as the *Premiere* article had done.

Theory No. 3 says the memo was written mainly for the benefit of Wall Street. The company's earnings and stock price are down, and attendance is flat at Disney's domestic theme parks. Moreover, stock analysts are realizing—and Katzenberg is finally admitting—what this column reported last summer: that as an investment, *Dick Tracy* was a bottom-diver. Couple all of this with Sparky's brand-new deal with Simpson and Bruckheimer (whom some in the investment community now see as studio liabilities), and he needs to become figuratively as well as literally lean and mean.

Finally, the last school holds that Katzenberg is positioning himself as the savior of the industry—with an eye toward the day (quite soon) when the syndication and financing laws, which discourage networks from producing the majority of their own shows, are overturned and Disney can buy ABC. (Yes, ABC. The current consensus has Disney buying Eisner's alma mater ABC, and Eisner's other

alma mater, Paramount, buying CBS.)

But as we know, nothing in Hollywood is ever as it appears. Yes, of course Sparky wants to be the industry's white knight; yes, of course he wants to be viewed as the only sane, disciplined man in Hollywood; yes, of course he wants to send a message to both the creative and financial communities that Disney will not be trifled with; and no, of course there won't be a *Dick Tracy II*.

But a senior theorist inside Disney says the primary target of Katzenberg's memo was the studio itself. It seems that after two years of the bifurcated Hollywood Pictures/Touchstone Pictures "separate but equal" arrangement, Katzenberg has become increasingly dissatisfied with his two studios' output. They're producing too many similar movies and chasing after too much of the same talent. Hence Disney's huge deals with Interscope, Ron Howard's Imagine Films, and Simpson and Bruckheimer: Sparky has come to realize that continued success requires an infusion of different players capable of making a wider range of movies.

So according to the Disneyologists inside Disney, the real point of the memo can be found in one telling assertion: that too many executives—like maybe David Hoberman at Touchstone and Ricardo Mestres at Hollywood Pictures, among others at Disney—are creatively blinkered. Look for some senior-level résumé-Xeroxing at both studios.

See you Monday night at Mortons.

—Celia Brady

J. J. Hunsecker is on assignment. His column on The New York Times will return next month.



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During the first 47 years of his life, David Geffen became an agent, became a manager, was nicknamed Mr. Beige by his then girlfriend Cher, became Bob Dylan's friend, became Bruce Springsteen's friend, became Michael Jackson's friend and produced some entertaining movies and Broadway shows. And, as of a few months ago, turned himself into a virtual billionaire. Along the way, he faced down agents and managers, battled entertainment-industry moguls and became one of the most feared and loathed players in his field. Now he's poised to dominate Hollywood for the rest of the century.




Man in

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND
THE INCREDIBLY RICH:
Power-mongering
Hollywood caricatures
Schwarzenegger,
Ovitz and Stallone
make room for Geffen
(second from right).

Who's the Biggest Hollywood?

Sizing Up David Geffen, the Toughest, Richest Impresario in Show Business

A YEAR AGO LAST MONTH, DAVID GEFFEN SAT IN THE COMFORT OF HIS MALIBU BEACH HOUSE, SNUGGLED AMID HIS HOCKNEYS and his Johnses, and engineered the global auction of his record company. As the last big independently owned label, Geffen Records was in a position to command top dollar. Geffen, a slender man so puckish-looking that at 47 he could still be called the enfant terrible of the entertainment business, was looking to cash out of Geffen Records. But not in any customary, predictable way. On that spring weekend, Geffen had a great many other important entertainment-industry nabobs scurrying about, trying to figure out what he was up to.  A bona fide genius at spotting talented people and growing rich off their abilities, Geffen ruled an empire that at that time included the most successful independent record company in the world, the film company that produced *Beetlejuice* and *Risky Business*, and a theatrical-production operation with a large interest in such hit shows as *Cats*, *M. Butterfly* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Described as "a human computer"—and that by an admirer—Geffen had shrewdly bought and nurtured some of the world's most famous creative talent, including Tim Burton, the Eagles, Joni Mitchell, Linda Ronstadt and Jackson Browne. Time and again, *by Fred Goodman* Geffen had proved that he had more savvy, in-

telligence and nerve than any of his competitors.

When he's after a deal, which is all of the time, Geffen can be relentless. His focused, no-holds-barred negotiating style has polarized the

Beach Boys, the Beatles and Nat King Cole would acquire all of Geffen's operations.

With its sales of \$225 million and its 8 percent share of the U.S. market in 1989, Geffen Records

lieved that Geffen's ties to Warners were so strong that he would never ally himself with any other firm. Warners had been his parent company ever since Ahmet Ertegun, the chairman of Warner-owned Atlan-



music and film businesses, earning him a larger number of fervent admirers—and of enemies—than any of his peers can claim. But on that weekend last March, things were a tad different: these weren't rock-band managers Geffen was negotiating with but the heads of three of the world's biggest entertainment companies; instead of being a buyer, Geffen was a seller, working a deal that could net him more than half a billion dollars. With the stakes so high, Geffen had outdone himself, brilliantly playing three suitors against one another. Indeed, a popular story around the industry—which Geffen and his lead attorney, Arthur Fleisher Jr., deny—has it that some of Geffen's own lawyers were largely kept in the dark about the negotiations. The story may be apocryphal, but attorneys and executives who know Geffen are more than willing to believe it—a tribute to his talent for corporate intrigue. As a veteran entertainment-industry executive puts it, "He calls and expects you to tell him everything you know but gives you selective information. Anything important he holds to himself."

Britain's Thorn/EMI looked like the front-runner. On Monday, March 5, word circulated through the New York offices of Thorn's Capitol/EMI Records division that the deal was all but in the bag: for \$700 million, the company of the

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS: Geffen with patron Ahmet Ertegun and their dates; with mentor Steve Ross and some acquaintances; with investments Trevor Nunn and Andrew Lloyd Webber at the opening of Cats

would allow Thorn to accomplish its long-overdue coming-of-age in the record business. But after 30 years studded with spectacular failures—this is, after all, the label that had to be forced by its parent company to distribute the Beatles in America—Thorn's record operations, through the talents of M.C. Hammer and Bonnie Raitt, were legitimately hot. The addition of Geffen's company—and Geffen himself—would finally silence the critics in the industry.

Obviously, Thorn/EMI was offering an astonishing sum, but there were other considerations. Geffen's studied casualness (he is almost never seen in anything besides his pressed-jeans-and-T-shirt uniform; his Beverly Hills office is so low-key that he doesn't even have a desk) clashed with Thorn's rather tonier corporate culture. More to the point, Geffen simply didn't hold the company in high esteem. Two years earlier, when EMI had acquired majority ownership of Chrysalis Records—a company Geffen himself had fancied enough to acquire 10 percent of its stock—Geffen had been critical. "I don't think they considered what was best for their artists," Geffen had said of Chrysalis management. "Or they certainly wouldn't have sold to EMI." Would Geffen really sell his own company to the same stiff?

Steve Ross probably didn't think so. The Time Warner chairman be-

lieved that Geffen's ties to Warners were so strong that he would never ally himself with any other firm. Warners had been his parent company ever since Ahmet Ertegun, the chairman of Warner-owned Atlantic Records, had first needled Geffen into starting his own record label. (Indeed, Ertegun had won Geffen's devotion years before that, when Geffen was a struggling manager and Ertegun, recognizing raw business acumen when he saw it, wrote him a check for \$50,000 to help him get on his feet. Ertegun never allowed Geffen to repay the loan, but he made his investment back many times over after Geffen spotted Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and brought them to Atlantic.) In 1973, Geffen had taken Ertegun's advice and, investing \$400,000, started Asylum, which soon signed Jackson Browne, Joni Mitchell, the Eagles and Bob Dylan. Two years later Asylum had joined Atlantic in the Warners recording family, with Ross paying Geffen \$7 million. Then, after a mistaken diagnosis of cancer and Geffen's subsequent four-year sabbatical from the industry, it was everybody's best pal Ross who had welcomed Geffen back into music, putting up a line of credit that bankrolled Geffen Records and, later, Geffen Films. It was often said that Ross and Geffen, both up-from-the-working-class New York Jewish boys, were like father and son.

But even fathers and sons have fallings-out, and something in the last few years had pushed the men apart. Several published reports have it that Geffen was enraged that Ross had kept him in the dark

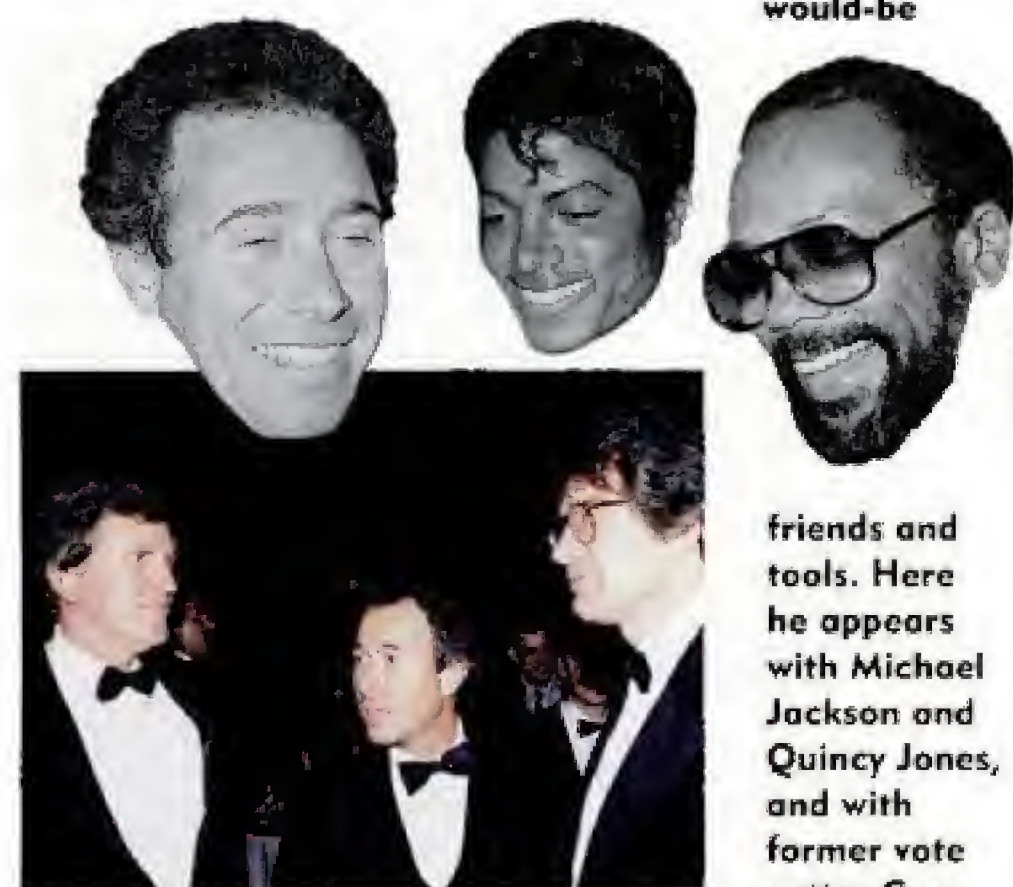
about the Time-Warner merger during 1988 and early 1989. It galled him not only that something profoundly important had happened in his family that he hadn't been told about, but also that while



some people whose talents Warners valued—Clint Eastwood, Barbra Streisand—had reportedly been presented with stock options in gratitude for past achievements, he had been left out. Most important, because the merger guaranteed that

upon his retirement Ross would be succeeded by an executive from Time, any hope Geffen had ever held of succeeding Ross atop Warners had been extinguished.

Whether or not the merger had soured the relationship, it had certainly limited Ross's ability to make



amends. With \$12 billion worth of debt freshly accumulated in the deal with Time, and with no equity left in Geffen, Ross had little room to maneuver when Geffen put his record company up for sale. Geffen must have known that Ross had neither the cash nor the stock to match Thorn; instead, through Arthur Fleisher, of the law firm Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson, he pursued another deal. That deal was with MCA in Los Angeles.

MCA had taken a look at Geffen the previous winter, but nothing had happened. When *The Wall*

PAL DAVID: Geffen is often seen with friends, would-be

friends and tools. Here he appears with Michael Jackson and Quincy Jones, and with former vote getter Gary Hart and former box office draw Warren Beatty.

Street Journal jumped the gun and reported Geffen's sale to Thorn as a done deal, however, MCA made its move. During the second week of March, an irresistible offer was made: Geffen would receive 1 million shares of a new preferred stock, each share equal to ten shares of MCA's common stock. The value of Geffen's stake in MCA would be an estimated \$545 million.

While the actual cash value to Geffen, after taxes, was said to be equal to or better than what Thorn was offering, there were other factors that made Geffen lean toward MCA. Not only did the MCA deal exclude his film and theater operations, but Geffen was lashing up with a known quantity. MCA Records, while not in the highest echelon of labels, was in better shape than Thorn and had better management, and its other core businesses—television, Universal Pictures, theme parks—were strong. These could certainly provide Geffen with plenty of new opportunities to exercise his knack for figuring out who and what are about

"Steve Ross made a serious miscalculation. David was one of the great calling cards for them, and he chose to leave"

to become immensely popular.

But maybe the most seductive part of the offer was that it would leave Geffen with 11 percent of the company, making him MCA's largest single shareholder, *with 1 percent more than chairman and most-august-guy-in-Hollywood Lew Wasserman!* And even if the preferred stock was restricted, even if its voting power was diluted and it couldn't be converted to voting shares unless sold by Geffen, even if he had to agree not to acquire any more ordinary shares of MCA for 20 years—well, it was still an unbeatable offer. And so Geffen decided that he was content

to continue to run his own company and to be part of the MCA family. When the deal was announced, the industry was stunned—perhaps no one more than Lee Phillips, who had handled Geffen's record operations since the 1970s. "He was in the dark until the day it happened," says a music-industry insider.

For MCA, the acquisition of Geffen was a huge coup. "Steve Ross made a serious miscalculation," said one exultant MCA executive. "Warner Bros. always tried to portray itself as paradise on earth for creative people: if you had the great good fortune to wind up in the Warner family, you would never, never leave. And David was one of the great calling cards for them; [Warners] was the place he chose to hang his hat. And he chose to leave. That's the big blow. Steve Ross just couldn't believe David made the deal." Another, smaller blow came after the MCA deal, when Geffen bought Jack Warner's nine-acre estate in the Benedict Canyon neighborhood of Beverly Hills as a reward to himself. Having discovered a

cache of old Warners scripts and eight Oscars, Geffen called Terry Semel of Warners and coolly demanded that Time Warner fork over \$3 million for the archival treasures. Ross, who would answer questions about the Geffen deal only through a company spokeswoman, officially wishes Geffen well.

DAVID GEFFEN IS NOTHING IF NOT ambitious. As he is fond of recounting, he started his career by lying his way into the mailroom at the William Morris Agency, and he has always done whatever has been necessary to reach the next plateau. Fired from William Morris for being—believe it or not—"too aggressive," he wheedled his way back in by tearfully begging a vice president to readmit him. When asked what business he was in, Geffen once replied, "I invest in myself. I'm basically in the David Geffen business." And as vastly profitable as the deal with MCA was, it hardly represents the apotheosis of the David Geffen business. "When I

made the deal," Geffen recently told *The New York Times*, "I believed MCA was a company that would be sold in the next 36 months." Somebody, Geffen believed, would want to buy his stock.



ALL THE GIRLS I'VE LOVED BEFORE: Geffen with ex-girlfriend Marlo Thomas; between bouts of tongue-wrestling with Cher

The sale came sooner. Within nine months the Japanese electronics giant Matsushita bought MCA, and the value of Geffen's stock rose yet again, this time to approximately \$700 million—and he still owns his film- and theatrical-production companies outright. Although Geffen had nothing to do with initiating talks between the two companies—that role was played by the Creative Artists Agency's Mike Ovitz, with whom Geffen has often clashed—he was hardly just a spectator. Geffen, for example, while famously publicity-shy—he refused requests to be formally interviewed for this article, although he called several times to harangue the author—is a notorious gossip. Although he denies it, many in the industry detected Geffen's hand when the *Journal* reported that negotiations were under way—whoever the source, the leak instantly boosted the value of Geffen's stock by almost \$200-million. Geffen also demonstrated his toughness as a negotiator, successfully resisting pressure from Ovitz, who was representing Matsushita, to broaden his deal with MCA. Ovitz reportedly called up Geffen and said, "If you don't sign a new exclusive agreement with MCA that includes Broadway and movies, Matsushita isn't gonna buy MCA." Geffen replied, "So they don't buy MCA." Ovitz backed down.

GEFFEN'S ALMOST INFALLIBLE ABILITY to cut a good deal is legendary.

He made his first millions by selling the publishing company of his first major client, Laura Nyro, to CBS Records for \$4.5 million in CBS stock. As Nyro's publisher, Geffen received 50 percent of the sale price



instead of the 10 to 15 percent he would have got if he had been only her manager. His ability to deal extends beyond show business. In 1976, after that mistaken medical diagnosis and his sojourn into semiretirement, he came to the conclusion that he hadn't had many interests in his life, or at least hadn't acquired much real property. "Here I was making my will, and I couldn't even leave anyone a picture or a vase," he once told *Esquire*. Soon he began collecting art and buying houses, the latter to the extent that one Beverly Hills real estate agent calls him a "house junkie," an assessment made on the basis of Geffen's purchase of at least two expensive Beverly Hills properties (one a lot from Adnan Khashoggi) that he neither built on nor moved into. Geffen bought one house from Marlo Thomas (with whom he had been romantically linked) and sold it to Norman Pattiz, the owner of Westwood One broadcasting, earning a few million. His current properties include the Malibu beach house, which is the home of David Hockney's *Splash* and *Bigger Splash* (Geffen says he has every print Hockney has ever done), and a New York apartment, which is home to Geffen's Magrittes. He bought the Warner place in Benedict Canyon (it contains the floor upon which a somewhat more famous short power broker, Napoleon, is said to have proposed to

Josephine) for \$47.5 million. Beverly Hills brokers say the house should have sold for \$65 million; by buying it directly from the executor of the estate before it ever hit the market, Geffen saved himself the

\$2 million or \$3 million brokerage fee. He proceeded to strip the Warner house of all its fixtures, paintings and cars, and auctioned them last fall at Christie's for \$9-million.

"His talent is being able to read

"If you don't agree, Matsushita won't buy MCA," Ovitz threatened. "So they don't buy MCA," replied Geffen

a situation. He always sees the target," says Jon Landau, Bruce Springsteen's manager and an unreserved Geffen fan. "As a human being he has always been an extraordinary friend." "There are a lot of people who pretend to recognize talent," says Al Teller, the chairman of MCA's Music Division. "Geffen can smell it out. And his follow-through—*tenacious* does not do him justice."

Geffen can be an ardent suitor when the prize seems worth it, flattering stars shamelessly. "Hey," says the head of a rival company, "he's weaseled his way into Bruce Springsteen's life, Michael Jackson's life, Madonna's life, George Michael's life, Barbra Streisand's life—he calls them every day. He courts them; he has them over to the house for a little tête-à-tête. That's what he does."

It's telling that not one of those artists actually records for Geffen. And indeed, Geffen's egomania tends to sour his relationships with many of the stars who do work

with him. Although his management company would not comment, sources close to Don Henley—one of Geffen's biggest acts—say Henley's dealings with Geffen range from strained to nonexistent. His relationship with Neil Young deteriorated to the point that Young eventually found it difficult to write songs; in the end, Geffen grew so abusive that he sued Young for making uncommercial records; the suit was eventually dropped. Geffen had a similarly unhappy relationship with screenwriter and director Robert Towne over his film *Personal Best*, which Geffen produced. In what is now a well-known feud, Towne ended up suing Geffen for \$155 million, charging that Geffen interfered with and interrupted the production. Towne says Geffen hired armed guards at one point to prevent him from working on the film and later to keep him out of the projection booths at the New York and Los Angeles premieres. Geffen, in turn, gave a scathing deposition in Towne's divorce suit and pointed to the movie's runaway budget, among other things. Towne claims that Geffen allowed him to complete *Personal Best* only after he relinquished rights to two other projects, *Greystoke* and *Tequila Sunrise*. In the end, Geffen and Towne settled out of court. One attorney who has been beaten up pretty badly by Geffen says, "At the end of the day, Geffen doesn't give a fuck about anyone. He thinks the artists are all idiots and functional retardates."

Michael? Barbra? Idiots? *No way, darling, you're great, you're fabulous, I adore you.* There may be no one in show business who's a more formidable seducer of talent. In some cases—Nyro, Cher—the relationship went beyond the corporate to the romantic, although a pair of more unlikely romantics than Geffen and Cher would be painful to envision. (Their love affair, as depicted by journalist Julie Baumgold in *Esquire* in 1975, included arguments over who had the larger bank balance [Cher won, \$900,000 to \$780,000]; Cher's saying to

Geffen, "Feel my ass—hard as a rock"; and bouts of tongue-wrestling.) Geffen can be a powerful schmoozer; his overheard sign-off from a telephone conversation with Michael Jackson last December—"Yes, Michael, I love you, too"—lacked only lip-smacking noises for effect. He can also be a stand-up guy. Geffen did not leave Yoko Ono's side in the aftermath of John Lennon's murder. Still, after the assassination, Ono released only one unlistenable solo album before they parted company. Obviously, he prefers those relationships where he spends more time counseling an artist than cleaning up after him, a legacy, perhaps, of his last days as a manager, when David Crosby, about to perform at Carnegie Hall, bullied Geffen into hauling in an envelope full of pot from Cali-

STAND BY ME: Geffen stalwartly supported Yoko Ono after John Lennon's murder, but after recording one more album for him, she was gone.



fornia. Geffen was nabbed during a baggage check at the airport in Los Angeles and tossed in jail. The case was later thrown out of court.

ON HIS WAY UP, FIRST AS A manager and then as head of a label, Geffen was remarkably driven. Even those he idolized, such as Ahmet Ertegun, could find themselves feel-

ing pushed to the wall in negotiations with Geffen. Then came the cancer scare, which, people say, mellowed him. Giant Records president Irving Azoff, a former Geffen employee and head of MCA Records who has patterned his own career after Geffen's, says his former boss has "been really nice to a lot of people for a couple of years now. He's been in a really good place for a long time." A well-known songwriter who has been friendly with Geffen for 15 years says, "He does little things. I had a song on a Streisand album a while ago, and he called me and said, 'I heard the song, and it's the most touching, beautiful song, and I think you should be told that.' Those are the kinds of messages he'll leave on the machine. If you're a true friend, he'll be loyal, [but] if you screw him, forget it. But I've never experienced the wrong side of him."

Others, of course, have. "David's a horrible person," says one prominent entertainment attorney. "Very charming. Very sociable. Brilliant at dealing with artists. But God! Don't be around him when he goes nuts. He gave his secretary \$1 million," the attorney says, repeating a story that made its way around the record business after the MCA deal, "and everybody says she deserved it." Actually, she got more: when Geffen Records was founded, the secretary, Linda Loddengaard, was promised compensation equal to 1 percent of the value of the company. When Geffen Records was sold to MCA, she received \$5 million for her years of phoning nearly 100 people every day and saying, *Hold, please, for Mr. Geffen.*

The good David Geffen certainly wasn't evident the day reporter Fredric Dannen interviewed Geffen for *Hit Men*, his book on the record industry. In the middle of their interview, Geffen took a call from Ertegun, who was trying to work out a deal to reunite Neil Young—then still recording, albeit unhappily, for Geffen's label—with David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash for an album. Although Geffen had only one-quarter of the old

band under contract, he insisted on receiving half of the album's profits. "Listen, Ahmet!" Geffen reportedly shouted at his former benefactor about his former clients, apparently for the cause of a singer he would shortly sue, "Crosby, Stills and Nash are old, fat farts! The only one with any talent is Neil Young." He was probably right, but still.

Perhaps no one in the music industry has had feelings about Geffen's behavior more intense than those of Brian Rohan, a music-industry attorney who is best known as The Man Who Punched Out Geffen in the Polo Lounge.

This is a slight overstatement, but the gist is correct. Rohan, who wanted Geffen to sign one of his clients to Asylum in 1973, accused Geffen of trying to go behind his back and negotiate directly with the artist. Geffen claims the dispute was over an anti-Semitic remark Rohan made. In either case, Rohan broadly announced at the Grammy Awards ceremonies that he would deck Geffen the next time he saw him.

The next morning, Clive Davis, then president of Columbia Records, was hosting a breakfast in the banquet room below the Polo Lounge in the Beverly Hills Hotel. Geffen was seated with Davis, seventies superagent Sue Mengers, Paul Simon and Jann Wenner, among others, when Rohan came up and said, "David, do you want to do it here or outside?"

Leaning over the table, Rohan grabbed Geffen's chair, and the two of them tumbled to the floor. Wenner, with a ringside seat, recalls that Rohan didn't actually hit Geffen but "started to throttle him—as we all know, unsuccessfully." Both Wenner and Jon Landau, who was also in the room, say Paul Simon leapt across the table and pulled them apart.

Not quite the Polo Lounge, not actual punches. Still, a legend was born. "You punched that little fuck?," former CBS Records president Walter Yetnikoff reportedly

asked him. "You got whatever you want for life."

Curiously, three of the acts Rohan says he works with today are signed to Geffen Records. But letting bygones be bygones is not generally Geffen's style. While

Geffen must have been pleased to see Michael Jackson help the unthreatening Mottola take over CBS Records



GIVE ME LAND, LOTS OF LAND: Geffen, a "real estate junkie," in



the grand offices of Geffen Records (top); the Jack Warner house (left); his Malibu beach house (right)

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST



wheeling and dealing his way to extraordinary wealth last year—Geffen should rank in the top 50 on this fall's *Forbes* 400 list—he found the time to help do in Yetnikoff, his longtime nemesis. The last straw apparently came last fall, when Yetnikoff refused to allow Michael Jackson, CBS's biggest act, to record a song for the *Days of Thunder* soundtrack, which was to be released by Geffen Records. The voluble, foulmouthed Yetnikoff, already on thin ice with his rather more reserved new bosses at Sony, reportedly offered to have

Sony buy Geffen Records for \$1 billion if Geffen would show Yetnikoff's girlfriend "how to give me a blowjob."

Geffen indulged his vengeance subtly. He was reportedly behind press leaks regarding Yetnikoff's waning power that hastened his downfall. Geffen also supplanted Yetnikoff as a confidant of Jackson's. Insinuating himself into Jackson's confidence, offering his business advice as a friend, Geffen persuaded Jackson to replace his manager and attorney, who had been pals of Yetnikoff's, with men close to Geffen. While Yetnikoff foundered, rumors abounded that Jackson would be defecting from CBS to Geffen Records or MCA. In the end, Yetnikoff left CBS, and Jackson stayed.

Geffen, however, wasn't through plotting. As Yetnikoff's longtime lieutenant Tommy Mottola was looking to shore up his position with Sony, observers noted Geffen's influence when the reclusive Jackson sat at Mottola's table at a dinner honoring Mottola in Los Angeles. Sony executives were pleased to see that Jackson and Mottola seemed close, and Geffen must have been pleased to see a not-very-threatening figure take the helm of a major rival. Later, Jackson's publishing company, ATV Music, through which he controls most of the Beatles' songs, moved from EMI Music to MCA Music for administration. What makes this peculiar is that MCA Music is not set up to manage the catalog outside the United States and will be obliged to hire another company—EMI, say—to perform that task. It's a testament to Michael Jackson's esteem for David Geffen that he will needlessly pay more for these back-office services just to be under the same corporate umbrella as Geffen.

As bountiful a year as 1990 was for Geffen—"I just made \$700 million!" he gleefully burred, unbidden, to Hollywood acquaintances last fall, days after the Matsushita deal was closed—it was not without its headaches. A generous contribu-

tor to AIDS charities, Geffen, an admitted bisexual, was cochairman last year of a planned rock concert to benefit Gay Men's Health Crisis. Because of the disease's association with homosexuality and intravenous drug use, few groups wanted to perform at this benefit. Geffen stepped in and persuaded one of his acts, the very hot, militantly heterosexual Guns N' Roses, to play. The only problem was that GMHC recalled an antihomosexual slur that had appeared on the band's album and disinvited them. The show was canceled, and Geffen, peeved by what he perceived as stupidity and ingratitude on the part of GMHC, gracelessly questioned the organization's right to decide whom they wanted to be associated with. "If you need a blood donor and the only person who can give you a transfusion is Hitler, you take the blood," Geffen was quoted as saying in *Entertainment Weekly*, no doubt pleasing Axl Rose. Later, Geffen attacked GMHC directly, calling its leadership "a bunch of assholes." As a result of these controversies, Geffen was attacked in *Outweek* and was targeted by gay guerrillas in Los Angeles, who pasted his photograph on bus-stop benches.

ALTHOUGH THE MATSUSHITA DEAL guarantees that MCA president Sidney Sheinberg will have control of the company, many in the record business find it hard to believe that Geffen will remain content merely to run his own recording subsidiary. "Sid Sheinberg," remarked one music-industry attorney, "has signed his own epitaph." Or, as Walter Yetnikoff puts it, "Sid Sheinberg can kiss his ass goodbye." So far there are few outward signs of a Geffen-vs.-Sheinberg power struggle. Geffen has spoken respectfully, even warmly, of Sheinberg, who has run MCA since 1973; some see in their dealings echoes of the happy, productive relationship Geffen enjoyed with Steve Ross. Nor is it entirely clear that Geffen would do well filling Sheinberg's or Wasserman's shoes and

running a vast entertainment-and-publishing conglomerate. An early experience as vice-chairman of Warner Bros. Films didn't appeal to him—"I hated those meetings," Geffen told the *Times*. His distaste for conventional corporate regimentation seems abiding: the Geffen Company has no vice presidents. It's also possible that his hit-making abilities may be on the wane. Unlike at Asylum, where Geffen's taste dominated, the success of Geffen




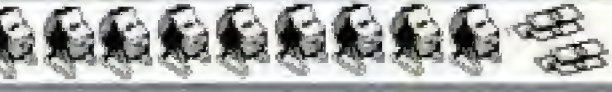



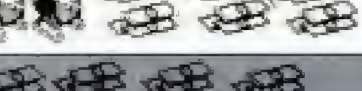




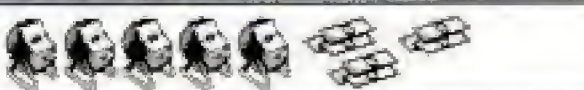
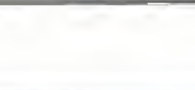


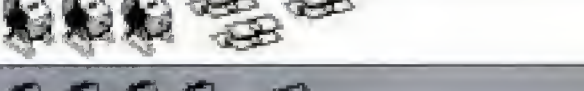








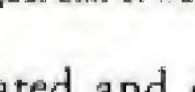
Zutaut, Gersh and Kalodner exchanging tapes. There are people who admire Geffen for hischutzpah and his arrogance—the people he attracts are also larger than life and arrogant. At Geffen, the A&R department has the aura of a bunch of stars—planets in orbit around David."

All in all, Geffen may aspire less to Wasserman's titular position as chairman of a huge corporation than to Wasserman's more

Who's Richest? Who's Powerfulest?


A Highly Speculative Estimation of the 1991 Wealth + Power Quotient



David Geffen	 
Mike Ovitz	 
Michael Eisner	 
Lew Wasserman	 
Steven Spielberg	 
Peter Guber and Jon Peters	 
Sidney Sheinberg	 
Jack Nicholson	 
Sylvester Stallone	 
Madonna	 
Barbra Streisand	 
Bob Hope	 
Judd Nelson	 



= unit of power and fear-based respect

 = equal unit of wealth

Records has depended on its talented A&R executives—John David Kalodner, Gary Gersh and Tom Zutaut—who signed and developed Edie Brickell and New Bohemians, Aerosmith, Whitesnake, Guns N' Roses and the other acts on the label's strong roster. Geffen's talent now seems to lie in managing his executives. "Geffen seems to foster a lot of competition [within his company]," says an A&R man at another label. "Everyone is watching their ass all the time to see who's got the power. I don't imagine

complicated and deeply satisfying position as the king of Hollywood. That role would probably better serve Geffen's knack for fostering artistic collaborations, acquiring and wielding influence, and practicing intrigue. Still, before rushing in, Sheinberg, Ovitz or any of Geffen's other putative rivals might take a moment to reflect on the fact that the last person to take a shot publicly at David Geffen was Walter Yetnikoff. And nobody's quite sure what he's doing these days. »

What *could* We Been Think

The Sudden

**and Total Triumph of Common Sense Over
Real Estate, Restaurants, Cop Rock, Debt, Cocaine,
Liquid Diets and a One-Week War in the Gulf**



ONE FALL DAY IN 1988 A PERSON IN MANHATTAN MIGHT HAVE DONE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING: voted for George Bush (believing in his "No new taxes" pledge) or for Michael Dukakis (believing in his "competence"), used a rowing machine, closed on the \$750,000 purchase of a two-bedroom apartment, purchased high-yield bonds, engaged in a serious discussion of the future of Communist expansion, subjected his three-year-old to a nursery school admissions test, chosen Beaufort as the name of his next child, sent a donation to Covenant House, eaten his daily allotment of oat bran, engaged in a serious discussion of the New York Knicks' playoff hopes, called Saddam Hussein a stabilizing influence in the Middle East, waited outside a restaurant for 45 minutes to get a table, and remarked, "You know, the East Village really is wonderful." But unless this person had also claimed to be Napoleon Buonaparte, no one would have called him insane.

Of course, things are very different now.

THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HAVE BEEN REMARKABLE IN THIS BIPARTITE RESPECT: NEVER before in the history of human civilization (1) have so many people convinced themselves of so many patently ridiculous notions and (2) has common sense reasserted itself with such rapid unambiguity and thoroughness, utterly destroying these ridiculous ideas. The victory of common sense in all areas of life—from Richard Darman's pragmatism, to Oprah's giving up her extremist liquid diet, to the return of the analog watch—has been rapid and nearly total. This is the age of Common Sense.

What do we mean when we say "common sense"? We mean that quality in each person

by James Collins

Have ing?



that tends to moderation and simplicity; we mean that natural balance and proportion that each person carries within him—a kind of low mental center of gravity, the reasonableness of the law's "reasonable man." Common sense travels as the crow flies. It rebels against self-delusion whether by willful ignorance (Reagan) or hypertrophied complication (Carter). Common sense is reasonable and steady (Steve Martin), not hysterical and impulsive (John Belushi). Common sense chooses ease (Avis) over hardship (backpacking) where hardship exists essentially for its own sake, but it chooses effort (George Eliot) over ease (*Baywatch*) when effort is rewarded. Common sense acknowledges human weakness without cynicism (seat-belt laws). It is intelligent (Stanford) without being intellectual (Yale), and sentimental (Harry Connick Jr.) without being subrational (Paul McCartney). Common sense pares away; it is temperate, neither fevered nor austere; bright, not shiny; still, not turbid; modest, not vain. Common sense is Rembrandt, not Rubens; Matisse, not Picasso; England, not France; George

SAINTS OF COMMON SENSE

Odysseus

St. Peter

Portia

Martin Luther

Nicolaus Copernicus

Benjamin Franklin

J. S. Mill

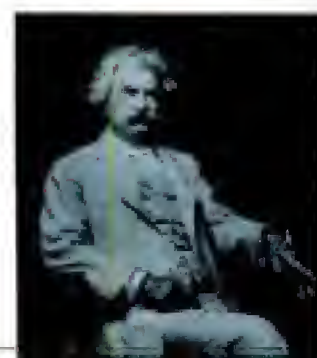
Samuel Johnson

George Eliot

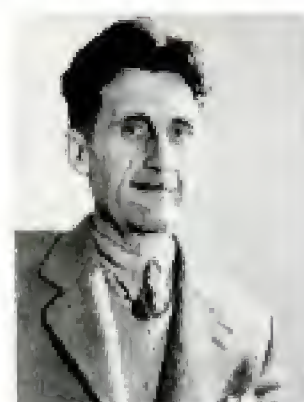
Talleyrand

Mark Twain

Edith Wharton



Will Rogers
George Marshall



George Orwell
Spencer Tracy
Dwight Eisenhower
Pope John XXIII

LIVING AVATARS OF COMMON SENSE

Bob Newhart
Pat Moynihan
Bill Bradley
Bill Parcells
Joe DiMaggio
Washington Monthly
The Economist
Joseph Fernandez
William Safire
Michael Kinsley
hedgehogs



Anna Quindlen
Hugh Downs
Charles Kuralt
Dr. Spock

FAKE AVATARS OF COMMON SENSE

L. Ron Hubbard
Andy Rooney



George Bush
Robert Fulghum
Paul Harvey
Cardinal O'Connor
Mario Cuomo
Spalding Gray

Orwell, not Aldous Huxley; Dinah Washington, not Billie Holiday; Updike, not Mailer; Andy Taylor, not Barney Fife.

What does your common sense tell you when a politician bases his presidential campaign on the pledge that he won't raise taxes? Of course — he will raise taxes. What does your common sense tell you when a little, arrogant guy despised in his own state bases his presidential campaign on how well he has run that state? Of course — that the state is a disaster-in-the-making. No one ever admits he has believed a politician, but who can honestly claim he foresaw anything like Bush's "revenue enhancement" and Dukakis's humiliation? No, Bush and Dukakis set the standard for the simultaneous, utter, pay-no-attention-to-the-man-behind-the-curtain collapse of delusions. Recently, and as never before, such collapses have occurred time and again.

What does your common sense tell you when you look at a rowing machine? A *rowing machine*? What could people have possibly been thinking? The device is obviously incredibly boring, tedious, unpleasant. Now everyone knows this. Covenant House? What was the idea? The real estate market was going to go up forever? What were people thinking? For some years parents of three-year-olds in Manhattan have taken them to be tested for private nursery schools. *Nursery schools*. Teachers at nursery schools have now called for an end to this practice. *Obviously* — no grilled chicken is worth an hour's wait in the cold. The shuttered bistros along Columbus Avenue attest to the power of that recent revelation. Sure, in 1988 the Knicks made the first cut — at this year's all-star break, their coach said he was "embarrassed." What were people thinking? What happened to their common sense? Well, it has now been restored with a vengeance. The East Village? *The galleries! The gritty beauty! The bohemian energy! The whole art-fashion-rock 'n' roll-heroin-Indian-restaurant thing!* Right.

THE PREVALENCE OF COMMON SENSE HAS EBBED AND FLOWED OVER THE COURSE OF time, but never has the tide raced so far out so quickly and then swept back in with so much force as in our own recent past. In January 1986 the gods of common sense provided us with a paradigm for this phenomenon. They expressed their wrath dramatically and tragically when the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded in midair. Somehow the idea of strapping a bunch of people to huge tanks of solid fuel, lighting the fuel and sending the people into outer space had become accepted as safe, ordinary, riskless, fun. NASA promoted this view: We will send a high school teacher along — see how easy it all is! Even the word *shuttle* suggested that riding into space on 2 million pounds of ammonium perchlorate and powdered aluminum and half a million gallons of liquid hydrogen and oxygen was no different from taking a bus. What could people have possibly been thinking? Common sense — simple, clear-eyed — should have told them that the whole enterprise was not just exorbitantly expensive but dangerous and uncertain. The gods made their point with supreme directness — no drawn-out malfunction, no tense moments that Mission Control overcame, no close calls: rather, a sudden fireball in the sky. And the gods of common sense even had a human representative on earth who reinforced the message when he demonstrated the simple cause of the disaster. The problem was something that physicist Richard Feynman could explain with a glass of ice water. It turns out that the flexible material used for the suspect O-rings stiffens when cold. Oh. Without the distortions of vanity and wishful thinking and self-serving brilliance, things can be very simple: space travel is dangerous.

Donald Trump, of course, is the *Challenger* explosion of finance, but he is discussed elsewhere in this issue [see "All of the People, All the Time," page 50]. Wall Street as a whole, though, offers an excellent example of the return of common sense. Anyone with common sense would have known that the boom would not go on forever. This point has now been proved with little room for interpretation. But as things went well, and then kept going well, any number of arguments were made to prove that they would never again go badly, and both fantasy and too-clever reasoning played their parts. The good times ended very quickly: the papers are calling the Wall Street firings a bloodbath. The satisfying irony is that the whole nature of the securities business is to understand the economy and to foretell when an industry will grow or contract. Those basic skills were not evident when Salomon Brothers leased Mort Zuckerman's huge, unbuilt tower on Columbus Circle.

Speculative bubbles have burst before, but instead of producing a financial panic,

Bill Cosby
Pat Buchanan
Lee Iacocca
commercial banks
Jeane Kirkpatrick
Pete Seeger
Allan Bloom



Robert Frost
Kingsley Amis



GREAT COMMON-SENSE SAYINGS

"It's the **appetizers** and drinks that really add up"

"It's not the end of the world"

All the things Eisenhower said that liberals like to quote

All the things **FDR** said that conservatives like to quote



"Look both ways"

"We can't be looking ahead to the playoffs"

"Nobody's perfect"

STUPID, OLD-FASHIONED CANARDS THAT TURN OUT TO BE COMMON SENSE

"Eat lots of **garlic**"



"Drink lots of water"

"Eat your vegetables"

"Stay out of the sun"

"Promiscuity is meaningless and destructive"



"Eating **raw** meat is bad for you"

"Junk food is bad for you"

"Wear a hat"

this one has led to an almost amazing clarity... to common sense. It's as if everyone had been hypnotized for the better part of a decade and at a snap of someone's fingers had awakened with no memory of what had just happened. Without missing a beat, after years of extolling debt, of saying the U.S. was *underleveraged*, of heralding the discipline of interest payments on debtor companies, of explaining that debt-driven swaps put assets in the right hands, Wall Street has made a rush to "quality," "strong balance sheets," "cash." Without the distortions of vanity and greed and self-serving brilliance, sometimes things are very simple: don't borrow too much.

And the scandals on Wall Street had a shuttlelike quality—self-deception propped up by complicated thinking that was bluntly proved absurd. In the early eighties many people on Wall Street noticed that before a takeover was announced, the price of the targeted company's stock would take a sharp turn upward. The explanations for this phenomenon were complex, even tortuous: academics proposed that it supported the "strong" efficient-market theory, whereby all information public *and* private is immediately reflected in the share price; others attributed it to the skill of arbitrageurs in picking likely takeover candidates based on exacting knowledge of their businesses and balance sheets. In time, of course, a more elegant and simple solution came to light: the price of a stock spiked upward before a takeover was announced because some people were handing other people briefcases full of cash. Oh.

So Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker *were* liars and mentally disturbed hypocrites, and Bakker was a thief. What could people have possibly been thinking? This was something so obvious from the start that it seemed too obvious even to be true—the purloined-letter method of concealment. Could the deception and greed of the TV preachers have been revealed any more decisively? The most reflexive reaction to these men—that they were complete frauds—turned out to be... absolutely right. Their destruction was swift, complete, indisputable proof of what common sense should have told everyone.

Many readers may remember President Reagan. He was once the most important presence in the country's political life, but his reputation after leaving office has been shuttlelike. For years he and those around him maintained that he was really an active, decisive leader. Then book after book by former associates appeared in a shocking march of betrayal: Stockman, Deaver, Regan, Noonan. Each one portrayed the president as an old man unaware of what was going on around him. Still, perceptions of Reagan were strangely unaffected by it all. What should have been obvious all along—that Reagan was pathologically passive and oblivious—has now suddenly become clear. The reaction to Reagan's own book indicates this: there has been no reaction. Utter silence. The man has completely vaporized. He has vanished. Despite all the ingenuity of his handlers and the wishful thinking of the public, it was really very simple: Reagan went to bed early.

The geopolitical shuttle? The Soviet Union, of course. All at once, it is finished—and how could anyone have believed it would last? Despite the overcomplicated theories on the left and the right, it was really very simple. For years, people on the left still said that socialism worked but the Soviets weren't really a threat; for years, people on the right argued that Communism was a disaster but the Soviets were nevertheless an enormous menace. Despite the years and years of intelligence and analysis and scholarship, did anyone foresee the shuttlelike collapse of the Soviet Union? It was really very simple—the place was a mess, hopeless.

One cultural disaster has been contemporary art. The East Village galleries have vanished without a trace; the graffiti artists are out in the cold—and even the subways are clean stainless steel. Another cultural shuttle has been *Twin Peaks*. A woman talking to a log? How long would people put up with that? Last summer, NBC programming virtuoso Brandon Tartikoff said that "tried-and-true is dead and buried." In that spirit ABC picked up *Twin Peaks* and *Cop Rock*. The top-rated shows for the fall were the very tried-and-true *Cheers*, *Cosby* and *The Golden Girls*. *Cop Rock* disappeared after eleven episodes, and *Twin Peaks* spent the season, crustaceanlike, scabbling around No. 60. In architecture the highly ironic, campy eclecticism of a few years ago is gone, and composed, harmonious, commonsensical eclecticism has appeared. (Deconstructivism is the viral exception that proves the rule.)

A final example of sudden transformation from plausible to plainly absurd: supply-

GREAT LAPSES OF COMMON SENSE THROUGH HISTORY

Venice



Marxism

the charge of the Light Brigade

the Treaty of Versailles

Munich

the Indian partition

Co-Op City

Quebecois separatism

the electric carving knife

Esperanto

the Vietnam War

quadriphonic sound

open marriage

the breakup of AT&T

summer football

Carrie, the musical

Tom Selleck as movie star

the Dykstra-and-McDowell-for-

Samuel trade



COMMON-SENSE HANGOUTS

Walt Disney Company

Canada, Minnesota and Iowa

the outlet mall in Secaucus, N.J.

matinees

home

the library

Europe after 1992



COMMON-SENSE NIGHTMARES

any plan so crazy it might just work
shortcuts

being passionately pursued by Elle

Macpherson/Matt Dillon

alcoholics

teetotalers

losing gloves

3:45 a.m.

a 1-iron

fantastic comp tickets to Parsifal



side economics proposed an ingenious, counterintuitive theory suggesting that lower tax rates would generate greater revenues and thereby reduce the deficit. When I snap my fingers at the count of three, you will awaken, and you will remember nothing.

NOT ALL INSTANCES OF THE RESTORATION OF COMMON SENSE HAVE HAD SUCH DRAMA. Like the sea working on broken glass, common sense has in some cases gradually—commonsensically—softened the dangerous edges of a practice or belief. This longer process has not produced shocks, but the simultaneity with which it has reached its conclusion in so many different cases is astonishing.

No one actually believes anymore that childbirth will be easy and painless and beautiful as long as one breathes properly. While many women still avoid using painkillers, they are somewhat more prepared for what they will undergo than they were during the ruggedest days of doctrinal natural childbirth; they make provisions for some kind of anesthesia if it is necessary, and if they refuse it, they do so for the commonsensical reason that it slows the whole process down, not for the rigidly spiritual reason that, for heaven's sake, horses and porpoises don't need Demerol.

In the area of human relations, *simplicity* and *straightforwardness* are now the bywords. The hardness and indirection and manipulation of an earlier time are out, as is seventies-style primal-screaming confrontation. Bosses ask their workers to tell them what is on their minds. Parents explain their actions to their children thoroughly ("Tommy, the reason why Mom and Dad don't like it when you pour lighter fluid all over Willow is that it hurts Willow") and encourage their children to speak up when they are hurt or angry ("Tommy, did you set Willow on fire because you wanted attention?"). The argument that divorce simply led to a different, equally valid family structure has splintered, and common sense is now reflected in the falling divorce rate.

The temperance movement may lurch toward intolerance and hysteria, but perhaps it is commonsensical to believe that cocaine is dangerous and that people really shouldn't drive when completely drunk. As recently as 1984 or so, recreational use of cocaine was still considered harmless. Not so long ago the cops in a town would chuckle when they once again stopped a looped property owner behind the wheel, then they'd call the wife and drive him home. The romance of dope—its redolence of Harlem and white boys living on the edge—has turned to indifference. Lou Reed wrote "Heroin" 24 years ago; Keith Richards's worst habit is smoking cigarettes; Slash of Guns N' Roses claims to have cleaned up. Look for a cool jazz musician today and you find Wynton Marsalis. The realization that dangerous drugs are dangerous has come along with a commensurate realization that undangerous drugs aren't that dangerous: almost no one can work up too much hysteria over marijuana.

As for academia, theory has certainly been in retreat for a while now in many areas, but Simon Schama's universally admired recent book on the French Revolution provided a powerful implicit rebuke to ivory-tower conceptualizers. The French Revolution is the most sacred world-historical event to all historians who have a theoretical bent. It is as endlessly paradoxical and reinterpretable as the Holy Trinity. Schama's 500-page book is a loose narrative, not much more than a list of anecdotes and facts.

No one buys 100-percent-wool or -cashmere socks anymore; they are impractical—fabric purism has lost out to common sense. Frozen vegetables, it turns out, are often more healthful than fresh vegetables, in addition to being always more convenient: so much for letting rot the fresh spinach that was found and purchased and cleaned with such effort. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that an economist won cheers from his colleagues at a conference because in studying the reasons why businessmen are slow to change prices *he asked businessmen why they are slow to change prices*. After years of recommending various, ever more expensive and complex locks for bicycles, bicycle experts now say that owners should use a thick padlock and steel chain. Now, about 20 years after the fact, no one can quite recall the high-flown reasoning for releasing mental patients into communities. An excess of iron in the blood is a problem that doctors have puzzled over for years. The *Times* reports that they now have learned to cure it with "one of the oldest and simplest medical treatments: bloodletting."

HOW, ONE MIGHT ASK, IS THE PRESENT REACTION TO A PERIOD OF MAD EXCESS DIF-

owning an **Aston Martin**



ethnic meals that are suspiciously
inexpensive

the run-and-shoot offense
linen

"Hi, it's Michael Cimino, and I have
an idea for a new picture"

HOLDOUTS AGAINST COMMON SENSE

fashion designers

artists

book publishers

New Age zealots

Joel Silver

the Kremlin

the *Daily News* strikers

Congress

Cambridge

NASA

Christian Scientists

orthodox liberals

the New Right

the **Vatican**



Palestinians

Israel

New Yorkers, especially David

Dinkins, transportation

commissioner Lucius Riccio, the

Mets' management, network news
divisions

Tokyo real estate speculators

MADMEN TURNED COMMONSENSICAL

Jack Kemp

Keith Richards

Dennis Hopper

St. Augustine

Ted Turner

Pete Townshend

investment bankers

who still have jobs

Richard Nixon

Michael Corleone

Henry V

U. S. Grant ☺



ferent from that of previous eras? Are we experiencing something new or simply a swing of the pendulum? The 1920s, for example, saw wild speculation, free spending and high living. The thirties were a bad hangover, and are we not now undergoing a similar reevaluation of our indiscipline, decadence, narcissism and greed? No. While that period was characterized by desperate passions for communism and fascism, ideology has never had less to do with anything than it does today. The *Times* now has headlines like SOUTH AFRICA MOVES TO SCRAP APARTHEID. Pragmatic Doug Wilder is the new Jesse Jackson; pragmatic George Bush is the new Ronald Reagan. According to the *Times*, the politician of the moment is the commonsensically principled Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Perhaps the fifties are an appropriate analogy, then — a parallel period of conformity and quiescence? Was that an era of common sense — orderly, prosperous, simple? No. The fifties were repressive. They were simple only in the way that someone completely unconscious of his instincts and desires is simple. Common sense follows the completed struggle over these drives. Does anything have to be repressed anymore? Does anyone care about the sexual revolution? It's over, done, finished. Everyone is very calm and reasonable about it. In the fifties Lenny Bruce was tormented and martyred; today 2 Live Crew is calmly acquitted by a very commonsensical Fort Lauderdale jury. And then, in a matter of weeks, 2 Live Crew is forgotten.

COMMON SENSE HAS NOT PENETRATED EVERYWHERE. WE WOULD NOT BE DEMONSTRATING common sense if we assumed that it had. One example of a place to which it does not extend might be the Middle East — many people are killing one another there. War and common sense are impossible to reconcile, but of all wars since World War II, the war in the Persian Gulf is the most commonsensical. UN resolutions, multilateral cooperation, Moynihanesque respect for international law — at least initially (international law! the doubtfully attainable common sense of international relations). In 1964 the Gulf of Tonkin resolution passed 88 to 2 in the Senate, hurriedly and with little information. This time Congress had five months to think about a case of unambiguous aggression and delivered a close vote. Relatively reasonable — as votes for war go. Michael Walzer argues in *The New Republic* that this one makes it as a just war — barely, but it qualifies. (Common sense is Michael Walzer, not Martin Peretz.)

The war itself has reinforced common sense. *Of course* it wasn't really going to be quick and easy, over and out in two weeks. And of course a hitch in the service is not just fun and friendly, a sort of blue-collar college year abroad. The Army has had to alter the ad campaign it used for years — the deception of the slogan "Be all that you can be" is plain now that soldiers are actually doing what soldiers are intended to do: die. The general from this war who will be a Republican vice presidential candidate is Colin Powell, not Curtis LeMay. War protesters do not excoriate soldiers, as they did during Vietnam; the slogan is "Support the troops — bring them home."

WE WOULD ALSO NOT TREAT COMMON SENSE WITH COMMON SENSE IF WE DID NOT acknowledge its drawbacks. As artistic movements and their mortal antagonisms fade even from memory — as the fury over abstraction comes to look about as serious as the folkies' anger when Dylan went electric; as democracy flourishes around the world (with some setbacks); as sound business practices return; as physical exercise becomes distinct from Calvinism; as a consensus emerges on the environment; as the Comedy Channel fails — we should be content. Nevertheless, we must address the Harry Lime Problem. In the movie *The Third Man*, Harry Lime is a black marketer who sells diluted penicillin, crippling Viennese children after World War II. In a famous speech, Orson Welles, who plays Lime, compares Italy under the Borgias with Switzerland: one had tyranny and decadence but produced the Renaissance, the other had republican civility and produced the cuckoo clock and chocolates. Will Garrison Keillor be the writer this age hands down to its descendants? Will Kevin Costner make us miss Stallone? Will Bill Bradley make us long for Lyndon Johnson? Will all our clothing come from The Gap? Has the East Village been replaced by Turtle Bay? It is one thing to be still; it is another to be inert. If we are lucky enough to actually have a depression and World War III, we won't have this to worry about. ☺

How Donald Trump Fooled the Media, Used the Media to Fool the Banks, Used the Banks to Fool the Bondholders and Used the Bondholders to Pay for the Yachts and Mansions and Mistresses

WITH HIS BLUSTER AND HIS EXTRAVAGANCE AND HIS TABLOID love life, Donald Trump has always been a source of considerable entertainment. If we're honest, we all have to admit that after his every achievement in greed or vanity we've said to ourselves, *Heck, you've gotta love that guy!* Like some funny, impossibly venal puppet in a Punch-and-Judy show, Trump has always given us a good laugh. In fact, Trump's image as a buffoon is just another example of how the press has protected him from real scrutiny for so long. While

one would prefer not to be considered a joke, that is not so bad if it distracts people from seeing what one really is: a charlatan, a liar, a cheat. But if Trump has thrown the press and public off his trail during the last year, he has not managed the same trick with law enforcement. SPY has learned that Trump's 1988 sale of Resorts International to Merv Griffin is now the subject of two criminal investigations, one by the FBI. "We are looking into the organized-crime [side of it]," says a law-enforcement official. Furthermore, John

Sweeney of the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement confirms that his agency is also studying Trump's participation in the Resorts deal.

A former...well, *top* Trump executive told SPY he considers Trump "evil incarnate." A mobster who knew Trump socially said of him once, "He'd lie to you about what time of day it is—just for the practice." And indeed, a close study of Trump's actions over the past few years reveals a man addicted to deception, a man who invested like

a fool, a man who shaved from deals and bled failing companies of cash so that he could live with absurd excess, a man who borrowed huge amounts from credulous banks and inves-

tors, a man who not only is not now a billionaire but *never* had \$1 billion or \$500 million or—very possibly—even \$100 million and who has been strapped since 1987. Donald Trump is not just some cartoon character, a guy with a comb-over and a press agent and a board game named after him; he is and always has been a real and fairly treacherous human being.

IN THE HISTORY OF FINANCE, DONALD TRUMP WILL BE KNOWN for one brilliant innovation. No one before Trump had used the press so cunningly to give himself legitimacy with creditors. Trump made the media his balance sheet. Reports of Trump's wealth in newspapers and especially in sober business magazines such as *Fortune* and *Forbes* and *Business Week* were the basis upon which banks lent him money and the public bought his bonds.

A spokesman for Arthur Andersen, Trump's accountants until 1990, admitted to SPY that they had never conducted a financial audit of Donald Trump. Andersen did conduct "financial reviews"—the term for a very superficial analysis of management and procedures, a once-over quite unlike an audit, which would include the accountants' solemn opinion of the finances under examination. Sources at Chase Manhattan and Citibank—from which Trump borrowed \$290 million and \$990 million, respectively—say that although Trump may have given the bank audited financial statements for certain specific properties, they never had an audited statement of Donald Trump and his finances generally.

Bankers Trust—which has lent Trump more than \$100 million with no collateral—declined to comment

An Exclusive SPY Investigation

by John Connolly



for this article. Manufacturers Hanover—which has lent Trump \$160 million—also declined to comment.

Two of the most powerful banks in the world report that *no one ever audited Donald Trump*. Some of the loans that the banks made to Trump even had provisions stating that if his net worth fell below a certain level (\$600 million, for example), Trump would have to pay back the loans immediately. Very prudent—except that the banks never insisted that Trump verify his net worth by audit.

So, without audits, often without collateral, how did Trump manage to borrow all that money? Well, everybody *knew* that Donald Trump was a billionaire, and who wouldn't lend money to a billionaire? Banks are in the business of making loans, and in the overheated eighties, a banker couldn't wait to make a loan to Donald Trump. The banks and the people who bought Trump's bonds were influenced by the news accounts of Trump's billions.

If Trump had told the press the truth, or if the press had held his claims up to even a rudimentary level of scrutiny, then Trump might not owe the banks \$2 billion on which he has suspended interest payments, and he might not have sold \$1.277 billion in bonds that are now worth only \$493 million. But Trump *didn't* tell the truth, and the media were pathetically gullible. Even the press reports of Ivana's prenuptial agreement are wrong—it is for \$10 million, not \$25 million. The information presented below is not based on hindsight—if journalists had been inclined to look, they could have found out the truth at any time.

"The total value of his holdings is more than \$3 billion"

—*Business Week* cover story, July 20, 1987

ON APRIL 20, 1987, JUST BEFORE HE bought Resorts International, Trump submitted sworn financial statements to New Jersey's Casino Control Commission (CCC). And, though not one to undervalue his "trophies," he nevertheless listed assets of \$1.8 billion, or more than \$1 billion less than what Trump told *Business Week* was his *net worth*.

If any journalist had looked at these sworn statements before calling Trump a multibillionaire, he would have found much that was of interest. Trump said he

had liabilities of \$979.7 million, giving him a net worth of \$819.8 million. Before we congratulate Trump for achieving even this level of success, however, we should note two things. First, all the estimates of asset values were his. Trump's valuation of Harrah's Plaza Casino is an interesting illustration of his reliability. Trump had bought out Holiday Corporation's 50 percent stake in the casino in 1986, using \$250 million in junk bonds. With that money he had paid off the \$152 million mortgage and paid Harrah's \$59.1 million. Well, that means Trump's original 50 percent stake should have been valued at \$59.1 million, too. So if we add Trump's stake, Harrah's stake and the mortgage, that's \$270.2 million for the casino. On his CCC documents, Trump properly listed \$250 million as a liability for the Trump Plaza (the renamed Harrah's)—he owed this to bondholders. On the asset side, though, the Trump Plaza had suddenly become worth \$400 million. Somehow, in a matter of months, the value of the casino had jumped by \$130 million, or almost 50 percent.

A second interesting fact about these sworn statements is that neither the asset values nor the liabilities add up. That is, the addition is off—the assets actually add up to \$1.6817 billion and the liabilities to \$979.4 million, for a net worth of \$702.3 million. Apparently, though, Trump's word was good enough for the CCC. The Commission didn't order an audit of Trump between 1982 and 1990.

On the same date that Trump supplied the CCC with financial statements, he submitted a report on the bonds that the Wall Street investment-banking firm Bear Stearns had issued so he could buy the remaining stake in the Plaza Casino. Here's what happened to the \$250 million:

- ◆ \$7.6 million.....to Bear Stearns
- ◆ \$152.6 million.....to Midlantic Bank, to pay off the existing mortgage
- ◆ \$59.1 million.....to Harrah's
- ◆ \$2.7 million.....in "casino re-investment obligation payments"
- ◆ \$7 million...in renovations (this is curious—the casino was brand-new)
- ◆ \$20.7 million.....to Donald Trump

SPY asked Alan "Ace" Greenberg, the chairman and CEO of Bear Stearns, why \$20.7-million had gone to Trump. He said he

CHASE AND CITIBANK

— two of the most powerful banks that lent Trump \$290 million and respectively — admit they never

didn't know but assumed that in any case, it didn't violate the bond covenants. This is how Trump made money—not by investing brilliantly or managing brilliantly but by getting a big up-front piece of the deals that were floated on his behalf. In addition, these were deals that made no sense financially. The mortgage for the Plaza Casino must have been around 9 or 10 percent. Does it make sense to pay off that mortgage and then issue junk bonds on which you'll have to pay 12.875 percent? No, of course not—unless you can pocket \$20 million in the process. And why would people buy Trump's bonds? Well, after all, everybody *knew* the total value of Trump's holdings was \$3 billion.

"A megadeveloper with a roaring '20s lifestyle and an ego to match his billion-dollar empire... Trump Tower [is worth] \$700 million... Grand Hyatt \$300 million"

—*Newsweek* cover story, September 28, 1987

IN THOSE SWORN STATEMENTS SUBMITTED IN APRIL 1987, TRUMP HIMSELF



listed the value of Trump Tower at \$135-million (one-fifth of *Newsweek's* estimate) and his 50 percent interest in the Hyatt at \$50 million (one-sixth of *Newsweek's* estimate).

Trump Tower and the Grand Hyatt were Trump's first major projects. Both were initiated when New York was still reeling from the fiscal crisis of the mid-seventies and was willing to make any deal with any developer, just as long as he developed. As New York's economy took off in the early eighties, the deals made Trump look like a winner. What the media have ignored for purposes of assessing Trump's wealth and ability, though, is that neither project was Trump's alone. The Hyatt, a renovation of the 64-year-old Commodore Hotel, is half owned by the Pritzker family of Chicago. Equitable Life holds the mortgage to the hotel, and since the Pritzkers presumably really *are* worth about \$5 billion, Equitable probably felt safe entering a deal with them. What did Trump bring? He knew his way around city government, so he won the tax abatements that made the Hyatt a success.

Equitable then agreed to be Trump's partner in Trump Tower, putting up half the money. Equitable sold those condos at the height of the market and then wanted out of the retail and commercial space. Trump bought them out with a \$75 million loan from Chase Manhattan. He has come to them with other plans, but they

banks in the world, two
\$990 million,
audited Donald Trump

have decided to pass on these ventures.

It is difficult to determine exactly what value to place on Trump's equity in the Hyatt and Trump Tower. One popular misconception is easily remedied, however: Donald Trump in no sense owns Trump Tower. The condominiums that make up all but 19 floors of the building are owned, of course, by the people who bought the apartments. Trump owns only the retail space and his apartment and office. He surely made some money on those condominiums, with Equitable's help, and the Hyatt continues to be profitable. But like a movie star with a couple

of early hits, Trump traded on those successes for a decade.

"Donald Trump is gloating, and the financial community agrees with him that he has given Merv a very tough lesson in 'the art of the deal'"

—"Merv's Money," by Mike Wallace, *60 Minutes*, February 5, 1989

IN SUMMER AND FALL 1987, DONALD TRUMP, DEAL-MAKER EXTRAORDINAIRE, accumulated practically all of Resorts International's outstanding Class B stock, largely from the estate of the company's founder, James Crosby. He paid \$135 a share. Resorts had two classes of stock, A and B, but Trump's B shares gave him 88 percent of the shareholder voting rights. He borrowed the entire \$96 million he needed for this purchase from Citibank and another bank and pledged as collateral his equity in four different properties, including the Hyatt and Trump Parc, a condominium development on Central Park South. One of the loan conditions required Trump to repay the loan in full if either he or Resorts defaulted on any obligation to any lender.

Only a supercanny, supersharp top investor like Donald Trump would have borrowed \$96 million and pledged the equity in prized assets in order to take over a business that was, like Resorts, barely profitable. Revenues of the Resorts Casino in Atlantic City had fallen for three years in a row when Trump bought his shares. The third quarter—July, August and September—is generally a casino's best, but Resorts lost \$7 million in the third quarter of 1987, just when Trump was buying. The company owned a parcel of land on which it was beginning to build the Taj Mahal, but it was a couple of years and a few hundred million dollars away from completion. Trump had to obtain a loan of \$125 million just to keep Resorts going. And only a superbusinesslike, superresponsible top investor like Trump would insist on a huge personal-service contract for himself while his company was doing poorly. Trump received 1.75 percent of the gross, plus 15 percent of the net, plus 3 percent of the Taj's construction costs, and some analysts believed that no cash would reach the bottom line for ten years.

By December 1987, Resorts's Class A stock had fallen from \$60, where it had traded when Trump was buying the Class B, to \$12. Since the Class B and Class A were usually priced at a ratio of 2.5 to 1, this meant that in December, Trump's shares were worth \$30. In only four months or so, he had managed to lose \$75 million on an investment for which he had borrowed \$96 million. Ignoring the old saying about throwing good money after bad, Trump decided to buy up all of Resorts's stock and take the company private. He would buy the shares and pay off his loan and the company's \$650 million debt with a junk-bond sale probably organized by Bear Stearns. Was this a brilliant move on Trump's part? Was he cleverly buying up Resorts stock on the cheap? Well, you may pay \$200 for a car, but if it has no engine, chances are you have still paid too much—Resorts's prospects were not very promising at any price. Furthermore, it doesn't make too much sense to vastly increase the interest payments of a company that is losing money and whose revenues are generally declining. Taking Resorts private was more an act of desperation than one of savvy. It would allow Trump to pay off his \$96 million loan—he did not have the money elsewhere to do this. He would refinance everything, borrow from Peter to pay Paul, and see what happened. Trump offered \$15 a share for the Class A stock and then increased this to \$22.

Trump had another problem. He knew that the CCC would not allow him to operate four casinos. He would have to sell either Resorts or the Taj Mahal property. How could he get the price he had paid for an asset, though, when his company's stock was a fifth of what it had been, when he was being forced to sell for regulatory reasons *and* when the only spend-thrift around buying casinos was Trump himself?

Sometimes God's work is performed on earth by the most unlikely peo-



ple. And just as Clarence proved to be George Bailey's savior in *It's a Wonderful Life*, Trump's fortunes were rescued by a fellow named Morris Orens. Orens is an attorney in New York. He is pudgy and generally disheveled, and his office is a cluttered, smoky cubbyhole whose every surface is piled with papers. One day a man named Fedele "Dale" Scutti found himself in Morris Orens's office. Scutti was a former used-car dealer from Rochester and Fort Lauderdale who by March 15, 1988, had managed to acquire 5 percent of Resorts's Class A stock. He was dissatisfied with Trump's offer of \$22 a share and wanted someone to make a higher bid. Why Scutti turned to Morris Orens on a matter that would involve hundreds of millions of dollars is an interesting question. The biggest deals Orens had ever advised on were initial public offerings for penny stocks.

But Scutti had chosen his attorney well, as it turned out. According to Scutti and others who took part in the transaction, Orens introduced Scutti to Ernest Barbella, who is a reputed member of the Gambino organized-crime family. (Barbella is scheduled to go to federal prison this spring for an unrelated stock-fraud conviction.) Barbella and Michael Nigris, an old college buddy of Barbella's who happened to be president

TRUMP referred to those involved with his Resorts deal as "OC"—i.e., organized crime

of Griffin Enterprises, asked for and received an option for Griffin to purchase from Scutti 160,000 shares of Resorts A at \$22 a share. In return, Nigris would, on behalf of Merv Griffin, make a tender offer of \$35 a share for all of Resorts's A and B stock. In other words, Scutti agreed to sell some of his shares to Griffin Enterprises at the low price of \$22, but Griffin Enterprises agreed to then buy all the rest of his shares and all the other Resorts stock, including the stock for which Trump had paid \$135, for the higher price of \$35 a share. Trump was hardly in a position to dictate terms.

On May 27, 1988, the following somewhat surprising deal was announced:

- ♦ \$1.9 million.....fee to Morris Orens
- ♦ \$5 million.....profit to Dale Scutti
- ♦ \$6 million.....consulting fee to Scutti
- ♦ \$201 million.....to Class A shareholders (\$36 a share)
- ♦ \$96 million.....to Trump for his Class B shares (\$135 a share)
- ♦ \$273 million.....Trump's payment to Griffin for the Taj
- ♦ \$64 million.....Trump's severance
- ♦ Resorts International went to Merv Griffin.

Surely this was not what Griffin and Nigris had had in mind. First of all, they paid Trump \$100 more per share for his Class B stock than they had originally intended. By selling their stock for \$36, the Class A shareholders were already receiving a big takeover premium. The equivalent premium for Trump would have given his shares a price of \$90—but on top of this, he received another premium of 50 percent! Second, Trump paid a bargain price for the Taj—\$270 million was less than half of what had been spent to buy the site and begin construction. Third, there was Trump's severance pay for his ten months of service to the company. This was a buyout of Trump's personal-service contract. The contract was undoubtedly one reason the Resorts shares were depressed, yet Trump received full price for his shares, *and* the contract was bought out—he got the best of both worlds.

He also got the money right away—it would have been years before his contract paid him \$64 million. Essentially, Trump managed to sell one casino, Resorts, for a profit and buy another casino, the Taj, at a big discount. Not bad for someone who was forced to sell, who faced a dearth of buyers and whose stock had recently plummeted to a fraction of what he had paid for it. This transaction does illustrate the art of the deal, but you will not read about Trump's negotiation technique in his book.

In early April 1988, speaking to a journalist, Trump referred to those involved with the Resorts deal as "OC," meaning "organized crime." On March 18, the day after Griffin's tender of \$35 a share, Trump filed a lawsuit against Merv Griffin, The Griffin Company and Scutti. Among the charges was that Scutti had "failed to disclose the existence of the individuals with whom he [Scutti] had agreed to act in concert, their backgrounds and identities." To contest the suit, the defendant would have had to allow discovery on just this issue. Merv Griffin might have been uncomfortable with the resulting publicity about his partners. Also, if anyone associated with the deal were found to be even slightly suspect, the CCC probably would have had to stop the sale. All lawsuits were

dismissed as part of the agreement announced on May 27—the agreement that was so extraordinarily favorable to Donald Trump. How...artful.

If Trump suspected that he was negotiating with members of organized crime, he was obligated to notify the CCC. And how did the deal work out? In effect, Griffin did exactly what Trump would have done with Resorts and did do with the Taj—he loaded up on debt and hoped for the best. Less than six months after Griffin's takeover, Resorts was forced to suspend interest payments to its bondholders; later it went into Chapter 11. The company's bonds now sell for about 20 cents on the dollar.

It may be worth noting that Dale Scutti, in addition to being a terrific (albeit high-priced) deal-making consultant, is an involved citizen. He has been one of the largest contributors to the campaigns of Mario Cuomo.



"Among the 41 new entries on this year's list [of billionaires] is Donald Trump. That bashful real estate tycoon claims he is worth \$3 billion or so. But subtract for his debt, and the figure is more like \$1.3 billion"
—"The Billionaires' Club," *Fortune*, September 12, 1988

IN THE SUMMER OF 1988, TRUMP TOOK the highly unconventional, even bizarre step of sending an unsolicited "confidential" statement of his worth to a number of financial publications. The statement claimed that Trump's net worth was \$3.734 billion. His big lie was ingenious: by claiming a wildly inflated net worth, he made the lower but still inflated figures that the ostensibly sober, skeptical magazines came up with seem realistic by comparison. If *Fortune* lops \$1.7 billion off his net worth and still comes up with \$1.3 billion, well, then, the figure *must* be accurate—conservative, probably. Of course, the resulting sum was still based on *Fortune's* inflated valuation of each of his assets. Even the reduced figure was hugely overstated, but Trump certainly looked like a billionaire.

"The story of how Trump really makes all that money has until now never been told. Looking into it reveals not only a no-fooling billionaire [but] a cunning wheeler-dealer given to tough-guy tactics"
—"Will Donald Trump Own the World?" *Fortune*, November 21, 1988

FORTUNE HAD IT RIGHT. THE TRUE STORY of this "no-fooling billionaire" *had* never been told. Regrettably, *Fortune* didn't tell it, either. The *Fortune* article listed, among other things, Trump's successful stock purchases. Shown below are those picks and the supposed profits cataloged by *Fortune*—and then the real profits, based on sworn documents Trump had filed with the CCC 19 months before the *Fortune* piece.

STOCKS	"PROFIT"	ACTUAL PROFIT
UAL	\$55 million	\$55 million*
Holiday	35 million	12.6 million
Federated	22 million	14.7 million
Bally	21 million	15 million
Gillette	2 million	1.1 million
Golden Nugget	2 million	0.1 million
TOTALS	\$137 million	\$98.5 million

*SPY was unable to determine Trump's profit on UAL, so we will give him the benefit of the doubt.

In addition to overstating Trump's profits, *Fortune* failed to list his losses for the period in question. To report the profitable trades without also reporting the losses is a little like saying about a Mets game, "Mets score 7"—not very helpful if you don't know what the other team scored, and especially unhelpful if the Mets actually scored only 5.

Trump's investing methods were unorthodox. In documents filed with

"Say—Doesn't That Short-Fingered Guy in the Pro Shop Look Familiar?"

Why Donald Trump Will Always Have a Job



Sure, Donald Trump owns both The Plaza Hotel and The Tennis Club at Grand Central, but only one of them makes money. With two Deco-Turf courts (and a management that called in five New York City cops when our photographer pulled out her camera), the club is open 90 hours a week, charges \$75 an hour and pays only \$90,000 a year in rent. And there's no debt!

the CCC, Trump called Bear Stearns's Ace Greenberg his "personal stock-broker." Bear Stearns kept two somewhat mysterious accounts for Trump. They were numbered only—no name was attached to them. A special code was required in order to call them up on the firm's computers, and if an employee revealed them, he or she would be fired instantly. (Trump-trivia buffs: the account numbers are 049-50544-2-1 and 049-50549-2-6.) According to Greenberg, he and Trump had agreed on what Greenberg describes as a "put-call arrangement." A put is an option that allows you to sell some stock at a particular price, and a call is an option that allows you to buy some stock at a particular price. According to Greenberg, "Trump could call stock from us, and we could put it to him." The implication is that Bear Stearns would buy stock, and if it went up, Trump could exercise his option to call it from them. He would pay Bear Stearns the price it had paid and keep the difference. If the stock price dropped, Bear Stearns would sell it to Trump for the price it had paid, and Trump would take the loss. Does Bear Stearns have similar arrangements with other clients? Greenberg assured us that it did, although he declined to be specific. To say that this service is unknown elsewhere on Wall Street might overstate the case, but it is certainly unusual.

Trump's casino license gave him a lot of leverage to greenmail casino companies: the license made his threat credible, and since few people had licenses, there were not many potential white knights. Trump used Bear Stearns as his broker in his greenmailing efforts; here's how Trump and Greenberg's put-call arrangement worked when Trump greenmailed Holiday Corporation, the company that runs Holiday Inns and that owned Harrah's Casino: In August 1986, Trump bought 245,800 shares of Holiday in his name for account No. 50544. By the middle of September, Bear Stearns had bought 854,200 shares of Holiday in its own name and put them in the 50549 account. Within a short time, the shares in both accounts were sold. The purchase and sale of a total of 1.1 million shares resulted in a gross profit to Trump of almost \$18.8 million. According to the CCC documents, "Trump's source of funds to pay the 50% margin requirement of \$34,543,499 consisted of Trump's credit lines with Chase Manhattan Bank, National Westminster Bank, and Manufacturers Hanover Trust." In a margin account a client pays for at least 50 percent of the stock he is purchasing and borrows the rest of

the money from his broker.

Trump's arrangement with Bear Stearns is very curious. If this were just a typical margin transaction, as the CCC documents imply, then why were the shares bought in the name of Bear Stearns and not in the name of Donald Trump? Bear Stearns charged "brokerage fees" of \$6-million—in a normal trade of this size the commission would have been pennies a share, certainly less than \$200,000. Indeed, when Greenberg describes the put-call arrangement, he is saying in so many words that Trump was not buying on margin, the CCC documents notwithstanding. Bear Stearns bought and owned the stock—the only way you can put stock to someone else or have it called from you is if you own it. We don't know when Trump put up the \$34 million, but it must have been after Bear Stearns bought the stock—Bear Stearns owned the stock first. In fact, if the put-call arrangement was legitimate, one wonders why Trump insisted a year later that he had put up 50 percent of the money. Why did he try to transform the put-call arrangement into a regular old margin account?

It certainly looks as if the call option may have been a way to avoid the 50 percent margin requirement in the 50549 account. Bear Stearns would buy stock, essentially on Trump's behalf, and Trump would not have to put up any money, at least initially. Would Bear Stearns ever have forced Trump to buy the stock by exercising its put? Almost surely not, but in any case, with all the takeover rumors, the likelihood that Holiday stock would fall was nil. The put-call arrangement was really a call arrangement, and the call was just a guise that hid stock purchases for which Trump could put up nothing. What did Bear Stearns get out of it? That huge fee. And despite that fee, Trump still did very well. His profit on the stock he bought in his own name would have been \$4.3 million—after the Bear Stearns fee, his profit on the whole transaction was \$12 million. Whatever Trump and Bear Stearns were up to, Bear Stearns's fees might appear to be profit-sharing between broker and client, something that is strictly forbidden.

In 1988, Trump was charged by the

U.S. Department of Justice with violations of the reporting and waiting-period requirements of the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act. On April 5, 1988, he consented to a final judgment and paid a \$750,000 fine. This was a story that the press almost universally ignored. Trump's press release, as expected, blamed everyone but himself. He went so far as to say, "I assume Bear Stearns will reimburse me for this expense." When asked if in fact Bear Stearns had eventually paid Trump's \$750,000 fine, Ace Greenberg replied, "No comment."

During our look into Trump's stock transactions, we came across an interesting item. In 1986, Trump, the "billionaire," needed \$31 million to meet a margin call for his purchase of Bally Corporation stock. The funds to meet the margin call came from his Holiday Corporation stock profits;

TWO MYSTERIOUS, nameless numbered accounts with special codes were kept for Trump by Bear Stearns

a credit line from Bankers Trust; a distribution from Trump Equitable 5th Avenue Corporation, which is the agent for Trump Tower commercial space; miscellaneous credit lines from other banks; and a 1985 federal income tax refund. All this desperate scrounging by a top-of-his-form billionaire for a measly \$31 million.

"The \$400 million purchase of the legendary hotel conferred upon Donald J. Trump and his glitzy empire a social cachet beyond price"
—"Stalking The Plaza," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 25, 1988

ROBERT BASS OF FORT WORTH, AN ACTUAL BILLIONAIRE, SOLD THE PLAZA to Trump and could not have been happier than when Trump came along, according to a source close to Bass. The Plaza was throwing off less than \$20 million a year in cash. A very generous multiple to place on this cash flow in order to value the property would be 15. So, under the most favorable assumptions, The Plaza was worth about \$300 million. Trump paid \$407 million. The Basses also sold Trump their stock in the Alexander's department-store chain. Trump borrowed the money to buy this stock—he still has not sold it, and it has fallen by 50 percent, or \$35 million.

"Mr. Trump paid a group headed by Harry Helmsley \$30 million to \$40 million for the St. Moritz in 1985 and stands to make a 400 percent profit"
—"Reaching for the Heights of Hotel Luxury," *Crain's New York Business*, October 17, 1988

LIKE THE BREATHLESS STORY A FEW WEEKS EARLIER IN THE *TIMES Magazine* about The Plaza, this one reflects an astonishing willingness on the part of the press to believe Donald Trump when he tossed out figures. In fact, Trump lied about the price he had paid for the St. Moritz—it was \$73.7 million, according to *Fortune*, or twice what he claimed. The Australian financier Alan Bond was reported to have paid Trump \$180 million for the hotel in 1989—a 150 percent profit, not a 400 percent profit. Bond is the man who, with a secret loan from Sotheby's in hand, made a winning bid of \$53.9 million for Van Gogh's *Irises*, and then had to resell it after offering it to Trump as partial payment for the St. Moritz. Bond's affairs, of course, are now in complete

disarray, so some doubt still remains about how much Trump has been paid.

"So far, it hasn't been a bad week. He has hauled home about \$50 million in casino profits alone"

—"Man of a Thousand Deals," *Daily News*, February 28, 1989

THIS IS UTTER FANTASY. TRUMP PLAZA Casino never netted Trump more than \$10 million *a year*. And not only has the Trump Castle never earned \$50 million a week in profits, but it has been a financial disaster. Here are some results:

Year	1987	1988	1989
Operating Income	\$40,646	\$36,042	\$34,424
Net Income (Loss)	\$1,707	(\$3,118)	(\$6,678)

All figures are in thousands.

For the first nine months of 1990, the Castle lost \$24 million.

The Castle may be losing ever more many millions each year, and the casino's bondholders may own pieces of paper worth a third what they paid for them, but that doesn't mean Trump hasn't found a way to make money off the debacle for himself. The Castle pays \$450,000 a month—\$5.4 million a year—to the Aliban (Nabila, its former name, spelled backward) Corporation for "promotional" use of Trump's famous yacht, the *Trump Princess*. Aliban sends all correspondence, including checks, to the Prentice-Hall Corporation in Delaware. (This company is essentially a mailbox. It has no relation to the textbook publisher.) They in turn send all correspondence, including those nice monthly checks, to Donald Trump, at 725 Fifth Avenue. One can't help but wonder why a casino losing millions a year is spending \$5.4 million on a yacht, much less on a yacht that is often seen in Palm Beach, where Trump owns a house and the casino owns nothing.

Payments for the *Trump Princess* are not all the money Trump has made off the Castle, though—the financing was classic Trump. He paid Barron Hilton \$320 million for the Castle in 1985. This was in itself foolish—the CCC had denied Hilton a casino license. Hilton was in the unenviable position of owning a casino without a license to run it. If Trump had simply waited a bit, he surely could have got a much better price. In

any case, Trump financed the purchase with a \$70 million personal loan and a \$280 million first mortgage on the property from Manufacturers Hanover. (Why does this total \$350 million and not \$320 million? What happened to the other \$30 million? Well, \$5 million went to Trump himself, and the other \$25 million went into working capital for the casino.)

A typical owner of a business would have been content with this arrangement, unless, of course, he could refinance his mortgage at a lower interest rate than the one he was currently paying. Supersavvy top financier Donald Trump is not the typical owner, though—he refinanced the debt at a *higher* interest rate. Once again, Bear Stearns issued junk bonds on Trump's behalf. Their face amount was \$350 million, but some were sold at a discount, so Trump received \$300 million. He then paid off the \$280 million mortgage and disbursed \$22.2 million to... Donald Trump. (This distribution consisted of proceeds from the bond sale and a portion of the casino's 1985 operating profits.) The interest rate on the bonds was 13.75 percent; the mortgage must have been around 9 or 10 percent. This is how Donald Trump, capitalist genius and creator of wealth, made money: by shaving money for himself from absurd deals that would cost his companies dearly. And why was Trump able to borrow money from banks and the public? Well, after all, wasn't he a billionaire? Didn't everything he touched become a spectacular success?

"[Trump] had the accounting firm of Arthur Andersen & Company do a special audit. The CPAs declared Trump had cash assets of \$700,125,000 as of November 30, 1988....So much for Trump's not being as big as he says he is"

—"The Unmaking of a Documentary," *New York*, September 4, 1989

AH, YES, "SO MUCH FOR TRUMP'S NOT BEING AS BIG AS HE SAYS HE IS." In some ways, his use of the Arthur Andersen letter is Trump's most elegant deception. The accountants' carefully worded letter did say—perfectly accurately—that on the specified date Trump had \$700,125,000 in cash, cash equivalents and marketable securities. Having seen the lengths to which Trump was driven in order to raise a mere \$31 million back in late 1986, we may be surprised to learn that on a typical day in 1988 he had 20 times that in liquid assets. Fortunately, a simple explanation presents itself: if one interprets it properly, which the Trump-adoring editors at *New York* were in no way inclined to do, the Andersen letter actually demonstrates that on November 30, 1988, Donald Trump was \$20 million in the red.

The date of the review was not the end of a fiscal year or quarter, but neither was it arbitrary. It happened to be eight days after Merrill Lynch had given Trump \$651 million in cash specifically for the purpose of building the Taj Mahal. The money had been raised through a junk-bond offering. The accountants' letter made only passing reference to the possibility that any of the \$700 million was earmarked for specific projects. It also failed to explain that the marketable securities were shares in Alexander's department stores—stock that Trump had borrowed \$69 million from Citibank and Bear Stearns to buy.

Andersen stated that Trump had \$700 million in cash and stock. Deduct the \$69 million owed on the stock, and that leaves Trump with \$631 million. But Merrill Lynch had just given Trump \$651 million for the Taj Mahal, so, in fact, he was "overdrawn" for \$20 million.

Needless to say, the funding for the Taj was an interesting exercise in Trumpian finance. Merrill Lynch's junk-bond sale on November 22, 1988, raised \$675 million altogether. According to CCC documents, here's where the money went:

- ♦ **\$24 million**.....underwriting fee to Merrill Lynch
- ♦ **\$118 million**....first three interest payments to bondholders — in essence the bondholders lent \$118 million to pay themselves
- ♦ **\$267 million**....to Trump (Trump borrowed the \$273 million that he had paid Griffin for the Taj. This distribution to Trump paid off most of that loan)
- ♦ **\$266 million**....actual cost of Taj Mahal construction

Trump claimed to have spent \$1 billion building the Taj—he actually spent a quarter of that amount. And on top of this, there are bills for only \$106 million worth of construction. A committee of bondholders will be investigating where the other \$160 million went.

This deal, of course, was restructured four months ago, although the new agreement has neither been completed nor approved by the Casino Control Commission. Under the agreement, bondholders are to receive 12 percent interest instead of 14 percent, of which 2 percent can be in the form of additional bonds. That means payments of \$67.5 million a year. How much cash will the Taj generate? For the three months ended last September 30, the casino reported operating income of \$17 million. Summer is the best time for the casinos, and there was no war or recession then, but let's be very generous and multiply that \$17 million by four. We get \$68 million. You needn't have been in Donald Trump's class at Wharton to know that the deal has no margin for error.

"Donald Trump may be down to his last half-billion in net worth and he has little liquidity"

—*Forbes* cover story, May 14, 1990 [co-written by John Connolly]

WHEN TRUMP WAS INTERVIEWED FOR this *Forbes* article, he made certain veiled threats against the publisher. Perhaps they had their intended effect: the original cover headline was IS DONALD BROKE? It became HOW MUCH IS DONALD REALLY WORTH NOW? The asset values assigned by *Forbes* to Trump's holdings were very generous. The Plaza and the Shuttle, for example, were valued by *Forbes* at the same price Trump paid for them even though a

lot has happened since 1988. Last March, Trump submitted a sworn financial statement to the CCC that listed his net worth at \$1.5 billion. Two months later, Trump's own bankers submitted a financial statement that, on a short-term basis (that is, based on what he could sell within 90 days), put his net worth at between \$282 million and negative \$295 million.

DONALD TRUMP MADE CAVALIER USE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY, HE DECEIVED without hesitation, he required more and more borrowing to maintain the illusion of success, and he utterly lacked business judgment.

Trump has had two worthwhile ventures—Trump Tower and the Grand Hyatt. Both of them were profitable because of tax abatements, and Trump went into both with blue-chip corporate partners. Neither partner has shown any interest in working with Trump again. What does Trump have to show for all his insanely public wheeling and dealing since those successes? Can anyone point to a single ongoing successful business? [SPY can—see box, page 55.] Even the Plaza Casino, which has been modestly profitable, is having trouble.

As an investor, Trump got into everything late: greenmailing was a successful gambit in the early eighties; Trump didn't start until 1986. The Harry Helmsleys of the world were selling hotels in 1988; Trump was buying. But worse than being late, Trump has been last. In a speculative boom, the idea is to *not* be the last person in line—everyone wants to keep passing the overpriced land or stock or painting on up to a higher-paying, greater fool. Donald Trump is the last in line for The Plaza, for the casinos, for the Trump Shuttle.

What we see amid the dust and rubble of Trump's career are bondholders who have lost hundreds of millions and banks that are in the process of losing billions. Trump's bondholders are not all institutions that were investing merely in real people's pension funds—many of them are themselves real people (we exclude bondholder Carl Icahn from this category). Merrill Lynch, for example, sold the Taj bonds through its huge retail network. As for the banks, they are now losing \$200 million in interest a year on Trump's nonperforming loans. Trump himself may actually suffer—he is personally liable for \$500 million.

A fool and a liar and a deadbeat Trump may be, but no one can say that he doesn't have touching, human qualities. Take his solicitude to his aging father. In January, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Trump had surreptitiously borrowed \$3 million from Fred Trump to help him make an \$18.4-million Castle Casino bond payment. A week before Christmas, Trump had Howard Snyder, an attorney for his father, walk into the Castle, go up to a cashier's window, buy \$3 million in chips and leave with those chips. With that \$3 million, Trump had the money he needed to make the bond payment.

The CCC requires that all loans be reported. Needless to say, Trump did not advise the Commission of the loan from Fred. "We found out about [the transaction] the next day. We began to look into it right away," John Sweeney, the new director of the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement, told SPY. "We sent a letter to the Trump Organization saying, 'We are treating it as a loan.'" This is what things have come to for Donald Trump. The boy from Queens had to go back to Queens for a bailout.

The CCC requires that all lenders be "qualified." Donald failed in his attempt to disguise Fred's loan as a purchase of chips, so now 85-year-old Fred Trump will have to undergo a complete investigation of his business life. At least Fred is in a better position than most of Donald's creditors. He bought chips, not Donald's line, as so many magazines, newspapers and bankers have done over the years. Casino chips, you see, can be redeemed in full at any time. Three-million-dollar loans to insolvent sons cannot. ♦



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**IF YOU'RE NOT RECYCLING
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An Exclusive Frank REVEALING THAT RICH,

INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS VIP'S AREN'T ABOVE



ACCEPTING UNSOLICITED OFFERS OF HUGE

SUMS FROM SPURIOUS HUNGARIAN ROYALS



THE

Millionaire

MOST OF US HAVE AT ONE POINT OR ANOTHER BEEN SUFFICIENTLY ENAMORED OF A FAMOUS PERSON—a bittersweetly comic novelist, say, or a skinny pop crooner we've seen at the Paramount—to compose and mail off a fan letter to that person. Most of us have also fantasized that the object of our adulation would respond with a long, handwritten note, that this note would be the basis for a vigorous, continuing correspondence, and that this correspondence would escalate into an intimate, enduring friendship (*So then Woody calls, says he's ordered us some Szechuan and would I like to come over and watch the dailies with him and Mia...*). And alas, most of us have had our fantasies duly deflated upon receipt of a terse, insincere form letter, signed, in the famous person's name, by a personal assistant.  These dreary thoughts in mind, we were moved to wonder, *What would it take to get a celebrity to respond to our letters personally and at length?* Fortunately for us, someone we know had been wondering the same thing. He brought to our attention a vast series of correspondences he had conducted some years back under the alias Thekla von Stett-Vasary, princess of Hungary. The premise was simple: Princess Thekla was getting old, had a sizable fortune to give away and a great deal of admiration for the actor/singer/industrialist/miscellaneous VIP to whom she was writing. She therefore wished to bequeath to said VIP the sum of \$1-million.  Sure enough, the princess's beneficence proved irresistible to the superstars she targeted. And the Thekla papers, as excerpted below in their original, uncorrected form, reveal much, much more about the world's movers and shakers: that they have hopes, dreams and needs like the rest of us, that they are eager to send amateurish artwork and home snapshots to elderly well-wishers, and that they are more than willing to provide their home phone and Swiss bank account numbers to complete strangers.

press



There're No People Like Show People

In the 1983 film *The King of Comedy*, Jerry Lewis plays a popular television talk show host who repeatedly shuns the overtures of a crazed, nebbishy fan named Rupert Pupkin (Robert De Niro). Pupkin, rebuffed one time too many by jaded receptionists and security guards, finally resorts to kidnapping the Lewis character and holding the star captive by binding him in masking tape.

The real Lewis is somewhat less difficult to befriend, as *Thekla* found out when she first wrote to him, on May 5, 1988:

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL!

Mr. Jerry Lewis
HOTEL WALDORF ASTORIA
301 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10022
USA

Dear Jerry,

...You know how much I liked the evening we spent together with you and our friends in Cannes some years ago. My late husband Alfred (Ambassador in Paris) and I attended the premiere of your film shown at the Festival. We told you that we did not miss a single movie of you during our marriage and even had private copies to show them to our friends in our neat cinema at home.

I am pretty old now without any relatives. I guess there is not much time left to sift my assets. As we say in Hungary: "It is not worth being the wealthiest Lady at the cemetery!" For that reason please allow me, please, to ask you if you would accept a personal donation to you. I honestly feel the need that those people who were of some importance in my private life should receive my heritage—you certainly belong to them. I wish to cede to you the amount of one million Dollar. Please, let me know how I shall manage the transfer of the money.

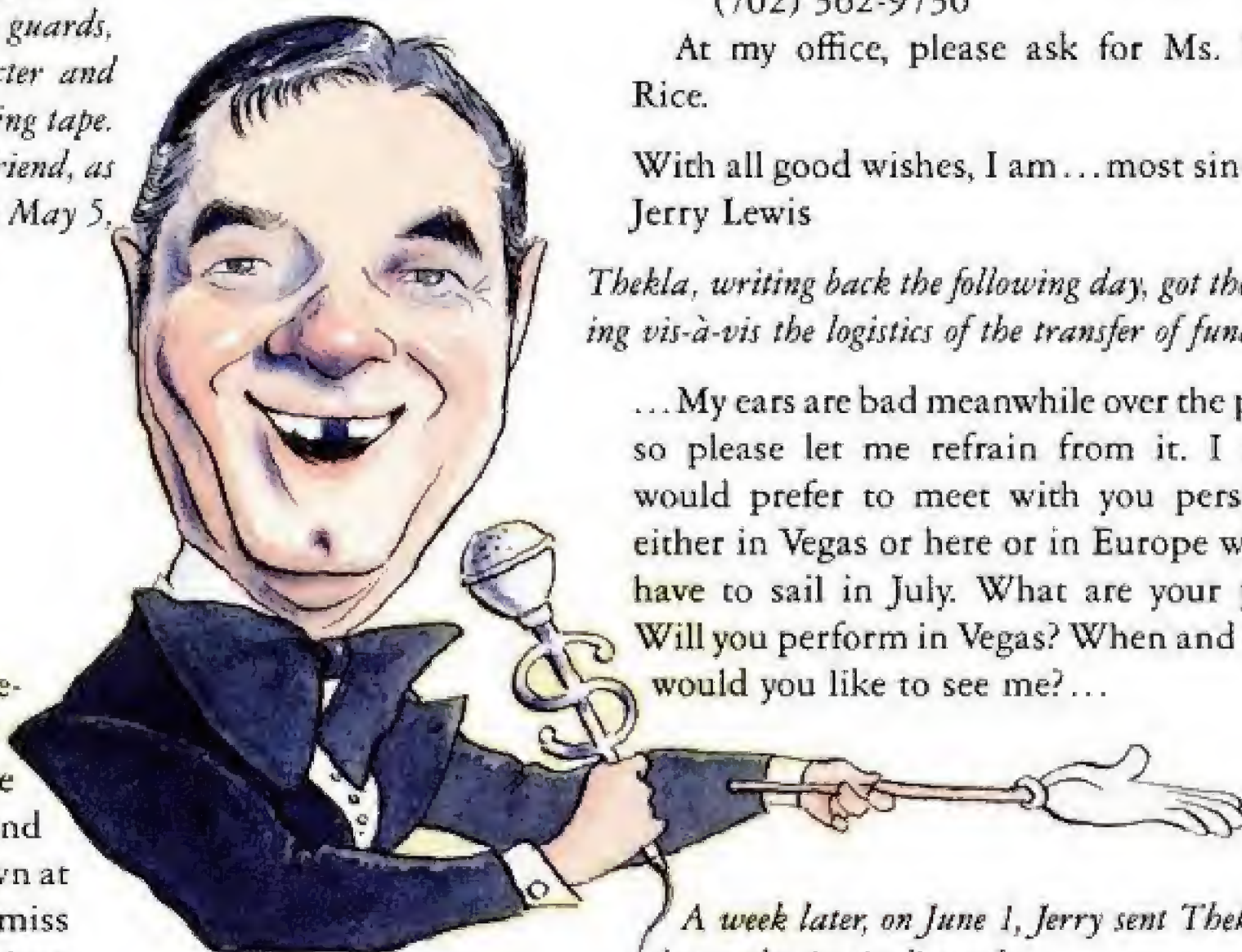
Fondly yours,
Thekla von Stett-Vasary
May 5, 1988

Little more than two weeks later, on May 23, Jerry sent *Thekla* a response by Federal Express:

My Dear Madam,

Thank you for the lovely letter that I received at the hotel in New York. I would have loved calling you but had no way of knowing where to reach you in Connecticut.

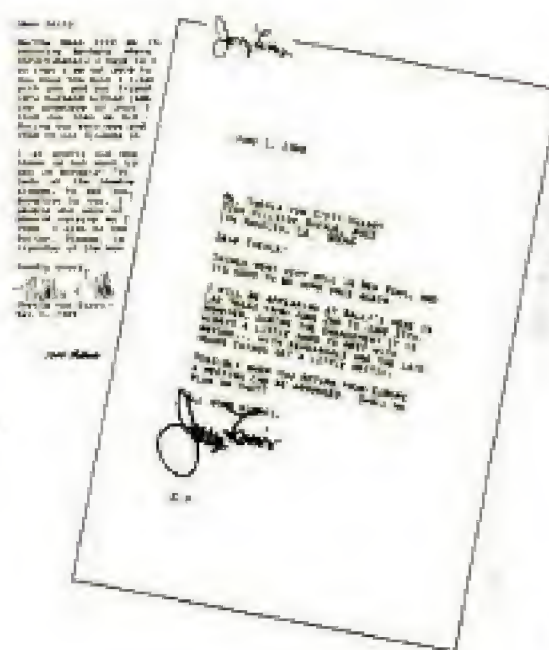
In regards to your wishes, which I was most grateful to receive...along with gratitude for all the good things you said about



"There's nothing I would like better than to come to Southern France for a few days," wrote Jerry.

(Thekla von Stett-Vasary, Ambassador in Paris)

RECEIVED
MAY 23 1988
FEDERAL EXPRESS
NEW YORK, NY 10022



my work...I can be reached at my home which is:

[Lewis's private address and home phone number in Las Vegas]

Or my office:

3305 W. Spring Mountain Rd.
Suite #1
Las Vegas, NV 89102
(702) 362-9730

At my office, please ask for Ms. Penny Rice.

With all good wishes, I am...most sincerely,
Jerry Lewis

Thekla, writing back the following day, got the ball rolling vis-à-vis the logistics of the transfer of funds:

...My ears are bad meanwhile over the phone, so please let me refrain from it. I rather would prefer to meet with you personally either in Vegas or here or in Europe where I have to sail in July. What are your plans? Will you perform in Vegas? When and where would you like to see me?...

A week later, on June 1, Jerry sent *Thekla* a brief but enthusiastic dispatch:

Dear *Thekla*,

Things went very well in New York, and its good to be home once again.

I will be appearing at Bally's here in Las Vegas from June 2nd to June 15th. However, during the engagement it is always a little hard to meet with anyone...With rehearsals and the late hours things get a little hectic.

Possibly when you return from Europe a meeting can be arranged. Shall we plan on that?

All good wishes,
Jerry Lewis

Buoyed by Jerry's apparent interest, *Thekla* wrote back on June 13 to invite him to Zurich:

...Do you by any chance have plans to be in Europe? We then could meet in Zurich to conclude the matter there at my bank. If I might invite you to fly over with me—it would be a great pleasure for me...

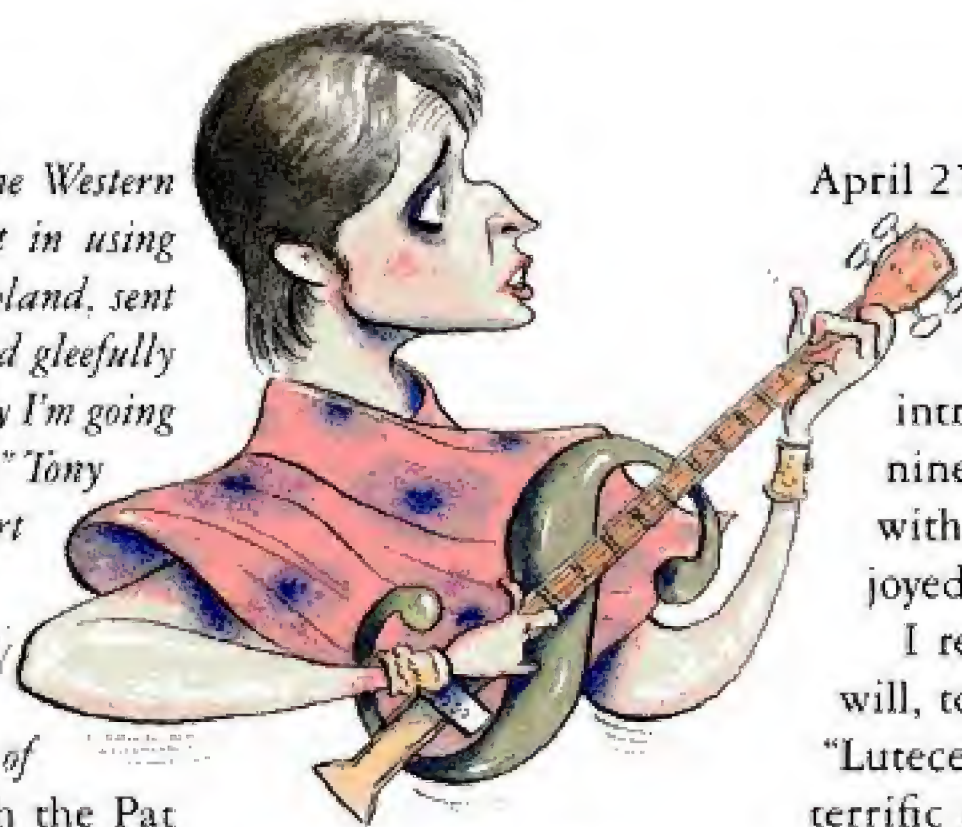
Jerry, mulling the possibility of a Zurich trip on someone else's dime, responded swiftly:

June 16, 1988

Dear *Thekla*,

As always, it's such a pleasure receiving your letters.

*Suisses. Over the course of three letters and one Western Union telegram, Joan Baez expressed interest in using Thekla's money to promote human rights in Poland, sent along photographs of herself in her kitchen and gleefully informed the princess, "Tomorrow morning early I'm going to the hospital for a much overdue hysterectomy!" Tony Curtis sent Thekla a catalog of his latest art exhibition and a breezily sketched still life of a table set for two, above which he wrote, "Dear Thekla — Here we are." Pat Boone sent Thekla a Mailgram, four letters and a copy of his book *Together: Twenty-five Years With the Pat Boone Family*, and asked her if he and his family, following their planned summer trip to the Netherlands and Denmark, could bum a ride back to Los Angeles on her Boeing jet. Brigitte Bardot supplied the number of her St. Tropez bank account, saying she could use Thekla's money for her charitable works on behalf of animals, and Audrey Hepburn wrote a gracious thank-you note in which she mentioned her good works for UNICEF. Mamie Van Doren—who wrote Thekla a record six letters—detailed the progress of the novel she and her husband were writing based on her experiences as a jiggling show-girl in Vietnam. Jane Russell seemed the most skeptical—"Your offer is most generous. However it is too hard to believe"—but enclosed with her letter an autographed photo of herself standing, full-figured and vixenish, in front of a Japanese folding screen.*



Baez sent along cheery photographs of herself in her kitchen.

April 27th. I am most happy that you agree to my sincere wish to please you! My late husband would have been proud of supporting you. When he introduced you to me in Washington nineteen years ago and we had dinner with you and some friend I already enjoyed your own sense of humour.

I remember very well, and I hope you will, too, that lunch we had all together at "Lutece." My husband and you ordered that terrific dish with the strange name. I knew what would be served (I am from Europe) but you both seemed very surprised about those Swedish meatballs. I will never forget the expression in your face!...

Thekla heard nothing from Koch's office until July 1, when she received the following letter from Diane Coffey, Koch's chief of staff:

Dear Ms. Von Stett-Vasary,

Mayor Koch asked me to acknowledge your very sweet letter and to tell you that he remembers with amusement the "Lutece" Swedish meatballs...

Again, many thanks for your interest.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Coffey

Though Koch's personal secretary, Mary Lehner, has vague recollections of Thekla's letters, she says her boss has completely forgotten about them. "He meets so many people and gets so many letters, it's quite understandable he doesn't remember," she told SPY.

So much for the quintessentially extroverted New York man. How about the quintessentially extroverted New York woman? On May 6, 1988, Thekla wrote to Erica Jong, the self-referential sex novelist:

2. New York Stories

Even before he became a professional ex-mayor who commands \$20,000 per speaking engagement, Ed Koch was known for his unbridled shamelessness. So it was with great hope that Princess Thekla first wrote to the then mayor on April 10, 1988:

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL!

Mr. Edward Koch
Mayor of New York City
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor,

Since my beloved husband passed away the only pleasure left for me is watching TV and getting read aloud the news...

I am an old lady of 82 years without any relatives. I guess there is not much time left to sift my assets...

Koch, with uncharacteristic brevity and reserve, responded two weeks later, indicating that Thekla's bequest would go to the City of New York. Then, on May 6, Thekla reminded Koch of their one meeting, which had supposedly taken place in Koch's days as a U.S. congressman:

Dear Mayor,

Thank you so much for your letter of



PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL!

Ms. Erica Jong
c/o Houghton & Mifflin Publishing Co.
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ms. Jong,

When you first told my late husband Alfred and me at that time that you would write your first novel we both knew it would be a success. Remember how you seemed to be a little bit embarrassed to tell me—as an old lady—some of the very delicate situations in your novel? I liked them, however, and also your second book has its own special place on my bed-side table to help me to overcome those lonely nights of sadness since Alfred passed away.

I am pretty old now without any relatives. I guess there is not much time left to sift through my assets...

Jong's response came two weeks later, by Federal Express:

...Since I would like to use your generous gift in a way that would benefit other writers, would you please have your lawyer contact my lawyer to make the necessary arrangements? His name and address are:

Norman Solovay, Esq.
Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin, Krim & Ballon
40 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019...

Warmly,
Erica Jong

P.S. Under separate cover, I am sending you autographed books.

Thekla promptly wrote back, thanking Jong for the books and asking her to come to Zurich, sans lawyer, to manage the transfer of funds. Jong wrote a second letter on June 6:

Dear Thekla,

I can very well understand that you do not want lawyers involved in this matter. I mistrust them myself. I would love to talk to you and invite you to meet me in New York or Connecticut the last week in June. I could be free to go to Europe for a few days around the fourth of July weekend.

Alternatively, I have to be in La Jolla for a few days in mid-July, and leave almost immediately thereafter for Italy. You could meet me there and we could travel together...

There followed a flurry of back-and-forth correspondence concerning travel plans, with Jong offering to accommodate Thekla at her summertime refuge in Venice, Thekla offering to fly Jong to Zurich on the Boeing, and Jong describing the Italian postal system as "hopeless." Jong's and Thekla's European travel schedules never jibed. Thekla last heard from Jong on October 4:

Dear Thekla,

Am in Connecticut deep into revisions on the new novel and barely have time to come up for air. Please suggest two or three alternate dates and places that you *know* are good for you and I will make every attempt to meet you.

Hope all is well with you.

Warmly,
Erica



"You could meet me [in Italy] and we could travel together," wrote Jong.

Ginger Rogers

5/1/76

My dear Erica,
I feel as well as you do
that the system is hopeless -
I have been, I find my
travels - Anyway - for me
Please
Ginger Rogers



SPY contacted Kenneth Burrows, Jong's lawyer and fourth husband, to inquire about her letters to Thekla and her stated mistrust of lawyers. "I was neither her husband nor her lawyer at the time she first began to receive the letters," he said. "Her then lawyer advised her to respond noncommittally... When I became her lawyer, I examined the letters and deduced that it was either a prank or a scam... So I wrote two letters to this person saying, 'Stop sending these letters or we'll refer this to the D.A.'"

3.

Playboys of the Western World

On April 18, 1988, Thekla, seeking a beneficiary on her home continent, offered \$1 million to Karl Lagerfeld, the German-born couture titan:

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL!

Mr. Karl Lagerfeld
144, Champs Elysees
F-75008 Paris
France

Dear Karl,

Do you still remember that funny lady in your home in Hamburg who did not believe in you as a creative couturier? Did I not drive you nuts when I discussed the matter with your parents so many years ago? Sorry, Karl, but I had to comprehend that I was completely wrong with my judgment!

I am pretty old now without any relatives. I guess there is not much time left to sift my assets...

A few weeks later Lagerfeld responded, from Monte Carlo, in virtually unreadable, physicianesque scrawl:

Chère Amie,

What a strange, touching and unexpected letter.

Thank god, my dear mother (she died 10 years ago) never listened to anybody. So I could do what I wanted. Nobody could expect then — 36 years ago — that what I wanted to do could become a world-wide succès. Fashion was also so different then and the fashion world less appealing.

I forgot that you advised against it — a lot of people did. But my dear parents trusted me and lived long enough to witness the result. Because of them I had to be a succes.

The million dollar-story seems unreal. If you don't see a better way to give your money away — why not — it will be in the best hands. If the idea will make you happy. But please don't feel guilty for the long forgotten past. I will remember you for the most unexpected and nicest surprise of my life.

But I wish you many, many happy other years. I hope you can read my handwriting but it is impossible to answer your letter another way. It's too personel and not even my secretary should know about it.

If you really want it, I send you my bank's adress here in Monte Carlo. From America it is easy to transfer money to Monte Carlo because there is no regulation. [Lagerfeld attached his bank information and account number.]

Please take care of yourself.

Very sincerely yours,
Karl Lagerfeld

Thekla wrote back a few days later to arrange a liaison in Europe, but this letter failed to produce a response. Thekla wrote again on July 30, this time to invite Lagerfeld to join her on "the Boeing 727" for a trip to Bangkok. Lagerfeld wrote back shortly thereafter:

Dear Thekla,

Thank you for your two letters. I was too busy to answer before. In the first letter you said you would come to Monte Carlo. You asked also what I would do with the money. Thank god I don't have to make projects for money I don't have. I am doing very, very well and need nothing.

I am sorry about the trip to Bangkok but I am too busy for that and I hate long distance travel in 727. You should have a Concorde.

I must admit that the story starts to look like a joke (and of the best taste).

Very sincerely yours,
K. Lagerfeld

P.S. Please don't write to me anymore.

When SPY reached Lagerfeld for comment on his letters to Thekla, he said he never took her offer seriously. "There are not so many women in the world with 727s whom nobody knows," he said. But out-of-the-blue bequests from elderly women are not unprecedented in Lagerfeld's life. "The amusing thing is that I inherited {money} from a friend of my mother who had survived her children," he said. "My mother had also a friend called Thekla. My father hated that woman and called one of his prizewinning cows Thekla."

Though Thekla was spurned by Lagerfeld, whose cynicism eventually compromised his capacity for venal fantasy, she had already found a Euromagnate entirely willing to accept her money. Indeed, for Ferruccio Lamborghini, the suave manufacturer of fast, expensive Italian sports cars, Thekla's notes seemed to hold the promise of romance. Their correspondence began on April 11,

1988, when Thekla framed her offer of \$1 million around a wistful reminiscence of a Lamborghini "creation on wheels" that her husband had given her many years ago. On May 2, Lamborghini wrote back, apparently without the help of Berlitz:

Dear Princess,

I think you will hardly be able to im-
aginate the happiness I had in reading writ-
ten by you a flash on your life, so rich in vital-
ity and so full of flamming youth. Besides, it
is wonderful to find out my indirect contri-
bution to your joy, your style of life and the
peformance with, or by which we cover time.

It is a Miura, my "creation on wheels" you
own? or the lovely spyder, or whixh model?

Now you are a young lady of 82 years,
without relatives, but non alone surely, as
you are a so charmingly skeptical mind,
gifted with great humor and consciousness.
Now, kindly, you make me know you want to
act so as I shall become much obliged to you
through a large gift. For all that I am unable
to conceal my embarassment, but I fell also
very curious and therefore excited. My work
offered you an opportunity to shock people
and as result, you attain to shock me too.

Well! If you want so, I consent to your
proposal being grateful. I don't know how to
manage the transfer of your gift. Is it from
Los Angeles? or from Zurich? I think that
lawyers can do it by the best. ...

By now I am waiting, enchanting Lady.

Cause of my very personal english, I bel
your pardon.

Yours truly,
Ferruccio Lamborghini

The torrid weeks of summer brought many more letters from Lamborghini. In different instances he invited Thekla to his farm in the Italian countryside, promised to pick her up at the airport with one of his hot-rod cars and responded in the affirmative to Thekla's invitation to join her on "the Boeing" en route to Bangkok. His letter of August 29 betrayed his frustration at not being able to arrange a quick in-person meeting:

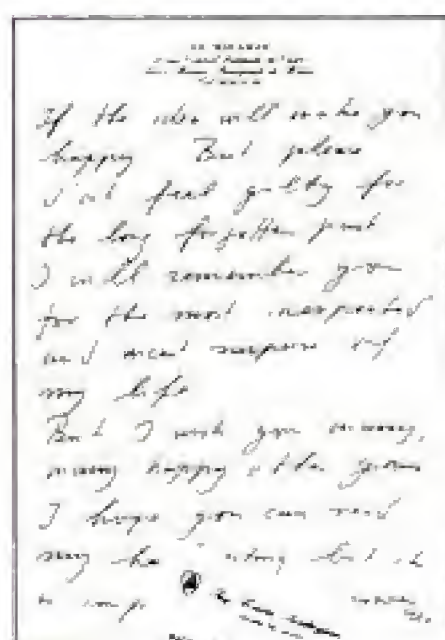
...If I only knew where to find you in
Muenchen, I'd take the next plane to meet
you to clink glasses whith you (of course,
with my very best wine and champagne
"Lamborghini"). ...

Like everyone else contacted by Thekla, Lamborghini was eventually informed that the princess's low cash reserves prevented her from acting on the promised bequest. But did his invitation to come to Italy still stand? Would Ferruccio still take Thekla for a spin in one of his namesake automobiles? Could she expect any complimentary shipments of his champagne "Lamborghini"?

Apparently not. He never wrote to her again. ☛



"If you don't see a better way to give your money away—why not—it will be in the best hands," wrote Lagerfeld.



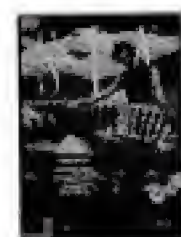


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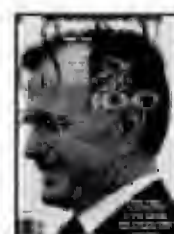


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MODERN

MANNERISMS

Constructing a personality profile

the deconstructionist way

BY HUMPHREY GREDDON

REVIEW
OF
REVIEWERS

Modernism marches on. At one time, a slick magazine article about a famous person was about a famous person (the Classical period). More recently, during the endless-seeming Romantic phase, a slick magazine article about a famous person was usually about the person writing it. But following the pattern set in painting and literature and music, a slick magazine article about a famous person has suddenly become complexly self-referential: it is about itself.

Why was Alan Richman of *GQ* waiting in a hotel bar in Manhattan for Robert De Niro? "The purpose of our meeting," Richman wrote in January, was "to begin a celebrity profile." Richman continued, "Celebrity profiles are... a form of free speech never envisioned by our forefathers when they drafted the First Amendment.... Inherent in the success of a celebrity profile is a certain affinity between interviewer and interviewee...." And so on. Apparently De Niro is difficult with journalists and had insisted on meeting with Richman for 15 minutes as a sort of trial run. Richman devoted three and a half pages of his four-page article—a cover story—to figuring out what he should ask during their pre-interview interview. How should an interview proceed? What subjects were best to avoid in an interview? In the event, Richman asked only one question before De Niro left abruptly: *Why had De Niro agreed to consider an interview?* Like a reflection in opposing mirrors; like Borges or Calvino.

Richman is not alone in making the *process* of writing a profile (particularly one about someone with a major motion picture in current release) central to the profile. Neal Gabler wrote about Robert Redford in *New York*: "Redford was wary about granting an

interview.... Even when he did relent, he kept voicing misgivings.... He phoned apologetically from his car on his way to the first screening of *Havana*, to express his uneasiness [about an interview] again.... He didn't want to do it.... He just wanted people to look at his films and forget the image." But the award for honesty, at least, goes to Hal Hinson, who wrote about Michelle Pfeiffer in *Esquire*. Hinson described his method of disarming his subject and reported Pfeiffer's reflections on this business of discussing her life. They ate lunch; he asked questions; she balked. And the next morning, Hinson wrote, Pfeiffer called and informed him that "she felt like vomiting after I left."

One measure of the difference between John Russell, the former head art critic at *The New York Times*, and his successor, Michael Kimmelman, may be that Russell never once ended a review with "Eric Fischl's India is a place, but it is even more a state of mind." In a short critique of India paintings by Fischl, the windy, adolescent, obvious Kimmelman did just this. The subject of Fischl's India paintings is, of course, India, "or more precisely the artist's relationship to the India that he encountered on a visit there." More precisely. And what a rich relationship that

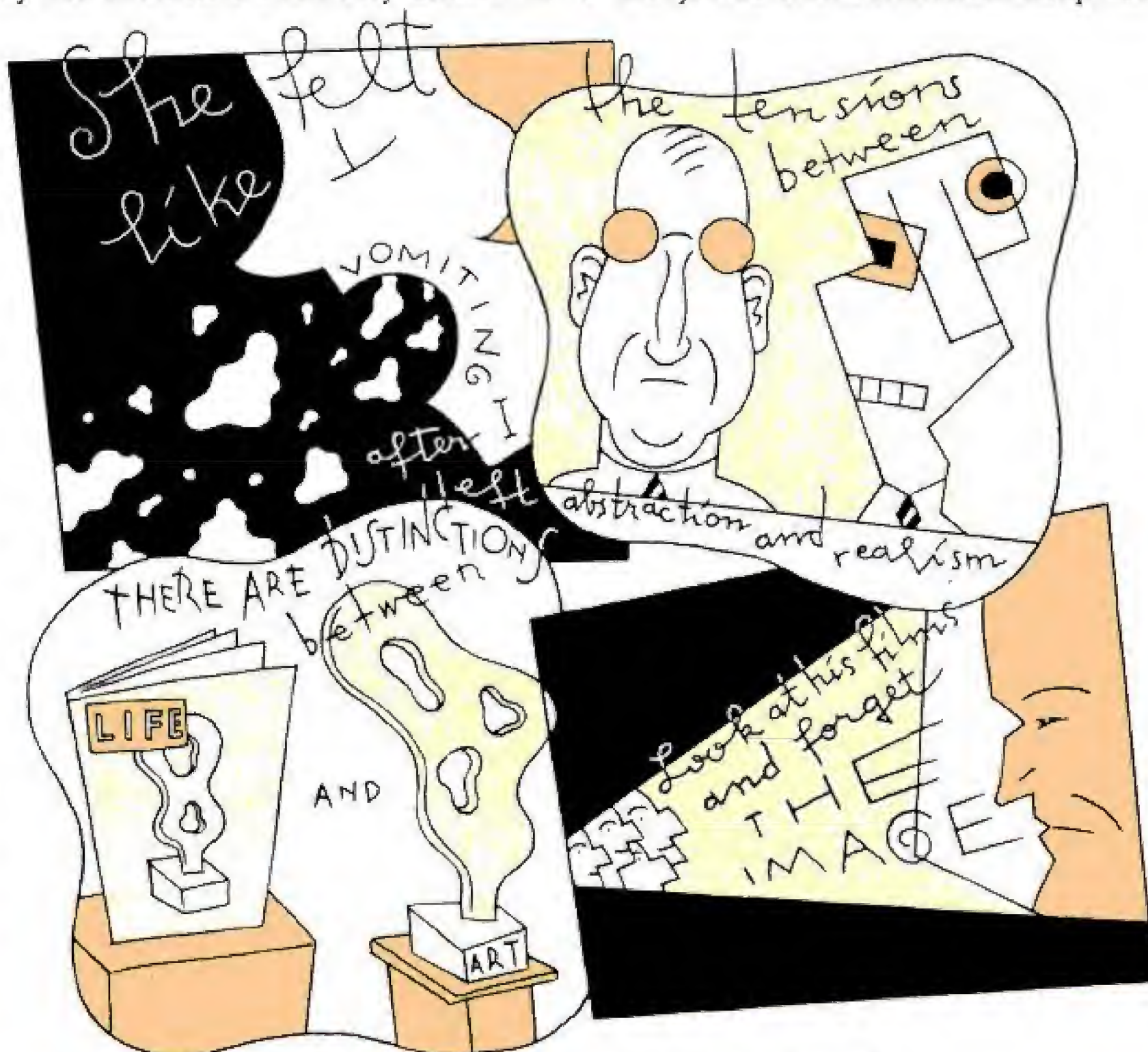


ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN GUARNACCIA

is: Fischl "seems to have struggled to find familiar ground...and to have concluded that, for an outsider, India remains a place of bizarre juxtapositions and odd transitions." What will Fischl's paintings of Canada (or more precisely, his relationship to the Canada that he encounters) conclude? That it is a place of order and predictability, perhaps?

A look at Kimmelman's work over the last few months suggests that he likes paradox. Fischl's paintings are "his most ambiguous and his most resolved." French photographer Christian Boltanski's work is "mundane but affecting"; it invites accusations of "bathos and dispassion"; Boltanski treats "banal objects reverently" and is an "inveterate liar" but "relies on basic truths." Photorealist Chuck Close "proves that the simplest ideas can sometimes be the cleverest"; in one of his portraits, "the tensions between abstraction and realism, between process and result, are especially keen." David Hammon's sculptures are "joyous, modest, offhand....Yet beneath the congenial exterior is a tough and incisive view of the world." The paintings of David Wojnarowicz "can be simplistic and preachy....But they can also be substantial [and] wry....The theme of order and disorder is prominent." (Order and disorder—what an absolutely cookie-cutter, term-paperish "theme.") The paintings of Sigmar Polke may be "ravishing or disheveled, mysterious or matter of fact....Despite the strong doses of irony and violence...he leavens many of the objects with wit." Furthermore, some of his works are "refined yet vacuous." And, in a sort of cadenza, Kimmelman writes of Polke that he mixes "high and low, tragic and comic, abstract and real, hallucinogenic and profane." Of course an art critic should appreciate contradiction, but in Kimmelman's case this is a formula for appearing subtle without really thinking.

Concluding the review of Polke, he writes, "In contemporary life as in art, he seems to insist, there are no easy answers." Perhaps not, but Kimmelman seems to have found some. Sometimes, though, he simply gives up ("At the end of the show, it may not be clear precisely what Mr. Polke has been up to for the last quarter century"; "A viewer tries to find connections among [Chuck Close's] portraits...only to discover that

the possibilities are nearly endless"). Just as the best haircut is one that does not look like a haircut, Kimmelman's best insights are those that do not readily appear to be insights: "Wojnarowicz's efforts demand to be considered together, for only in this way can the themes that link them emerge." How true. Of Wojnarowicz's use of multiple images, Kimmelman says that "the juxtapositions themselves imply order and disorder, but there is more to it than that." In a 1990 retrospective he points out, "To speak of the 'art world' in 1990 was in no sense oxymoronic." I suppose that's meant to be reassuring, but when had *art world* ever been an oxymoron?

The very, very long review of some books about the sixties that Louis Menand wrote for *The New Republic* was only superficially similar to the very, very short column Menand had already written about the sixties for *Esquire*. True, Menand repeated a humorous and telling anecdote concerning Bill Wyman's hair. The *New Republic* story had some fine things in it, and Menand did at least try to avoid the facile derision that is reflexive to half the people who write about that period (the other half, as we saw in this space last month, are still living in it unawares). Still, Menand was a little too self-satisfied as he gave the sixties the old fisheye (turns out rock 'n' roll was a racket to make money!), and he couldn't quite modulate his superior tone. Writing about Jann Wenner, Menand said, "The person who thinks Mick is cool is the perfect person to run a magazine devoted to serious fandom." Well, as cool as small, Washington-based public-policy magazines are, the leader of the Rolling Stones is *possibly* cooler than those who write for them. (Of course, Menand may be a huge fan of Keith's, in which case his dismissive attitude toward Mick is not only understandable but to be admired.)

Philip Roth's *Patrimony*, about the death of his father, has prompted much thoughtful comment. In *The New York Times*, Michiko Kakutani wrote, "But as Mr. Roth has been pointing out for years now, there *are* distinctions between life and art." (In fact, Kakutani's comment manages to be both self-evident and wrong.) *Newsweek's* Peter Prescott likewise believes Philip Roth avoids writing about his life: "Herman

Roth, a retired insurance man with an eighth-grade education, was not the kind of man about whom books are written. Obsessively stubborn, bossy and cruel, he can be made interesting only through the art of his son's remembrance....Roth shrewdly avoids the temptation to fiction." Everyone succumbs to temptation from time to time, so I guess Prescott's point holds up even when you consider Roth's portrayal of the obsessively stubborn, bossy, ill-educated fathers in *My Life as a Man*, *The Ghost Writer*, *Zuckerman Unbound* and so on.

Not only did Peggy Noonan write George Bush's most important speeches, she used to write his seemingly spontaneous remarks as well. Discussing recent mob movies in the January *Mirabella*, Noonan, who can be a wonderful writer, mused, "This thing we have with violence, this love/hate thing, seems to be becoming a bigger part of the national personality." In the same column, she predicted that *got whacked* will become a common piece of goofy slang. "Saddam—gonna get whacked..." Yes, it sounds just right.

Yikes! Another book reviewer—casting agent has surfaced (see last month)! A typical Susan Isaacs novel, says Helen Dudar in the *Times* Book Review, has "the sort of plot serviceable for an amusing little romp of a movie starring, say, Sigourney Weaver and Michael Douglas." An amusing little romp starring those two? A kind of *Gorillas in the Mist—Fatal Attraction*? Dudar has some work to do before she gets the call from Warners.

A few months ago the genuinely likable Ralph Novak, who reviews movies for *People*, came in for some commendation in this space. Novak's clever review of the courtroom drama *Presumed Innocent* had taken the form of...a courtroom drama. Science does not progress without the free exchange of ideas, so Novak is to be praised for allowing his colleague Craig Tomashoff to adapt his innovation to a music review. Tomashoff's review of Vanilla Ice's album of rap songs took the form of...a rap song: "*To the Extremes*/mostly thumps on mindlessly,/full of James Brown riffs/and silly repartee." Repartee? James Brown *and* Noel Coward don't seem like such bad influences, actually. ☺

WEIRD

LIBATIONS

*When adulation results
in becoming an
accessory to adultery*



The finest wine I ever drank was a French 19-something-something. It had a good nose and a fine finish, a deep color and a lustrous coat, two bright eyes and cute droopy ears. One sip was enough to disclose the unique characteristics of body and balance bestowed only by the microclimate and soil conditions of whatever province it was from. It was white. I know that. It was also (stop me if this gets too technical) delicious: crisp, clean and dry; round and full and big and svelte and tall and tan and young and lovely. It might have been a Chablis, but maybe not.

This memorable wine...Why have I forgotten everything about it? Because at the time of its drinking I was in a state of ethical turmoil, engaged in performing a favor for my favorite drummer in the world—a favor for which the words *pimping* and *procuring* are inaccurate, but for which *acting like a desk clerk at one of those hourly-rate motels outside the Holland Tunnel* is not. A brief review of the incident in question may serve to explain what I'm talking about.

In 1979 I managed to get hold of the home address of a rock musician whose drumming I much admired. I casually dashed off, in only five or six drafts, a fan letter as fulsome and obsequious as it was worshipful and slavish—rendered,

of course, in a vertiginous, frankly nauseating tone of self-conscious irony and self-deprecating sincerity. [*For an account of a prankish, entirely insincere gambit of this kind, see "The Millionairess," beginning on page 60. — Ed.*]

It worked. It almost always does. When, at the age of 14, I wrote to Isaac Asimov urging him to write the long-delayed third volume of his science-fiction detective series, did he not send back a charming, authentically autographed postcard? (Decades afterward, he wrote the book. I never read it.) When, a year or two later, Danny Kaye ended his weekly TV show with a word-of-the-week that was exactly the one that, earlier that day, I had suggested to a friend he use (*syzygy*), did he not respond to my excited letter about the coincidence with a delightful note? When my Julio Cortázar parody was rejected by *The New Yorker* and I sent it to the master himself in Paris, did he not reply with a friendly, amusing letter posted from Vienna?

They did, they all did. When, after meeting him at a reading in New York, I sent Martin Amis a copy of my book, did he not reply at once, warmly and appreciatively? No, he did not. In fact,

One sip was enough to disclose

the unique characteristics bestowed

only by the soil conditions of whatever

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the bastard never even acknowledged receipt. How different his chilly aloofness was from the unaffected, comradely accessibility of my rock idol. He, you see, wrote back. We corresponded. And when, around 1982-ish, a tour brought my pen pal through L.A., where my wife-to-be and I were living, and he asked if he could stay with us for two nights, I was perfectly nonchalant about it, inquiring only if he preferred that we repaint the place before his arrival.


Now, we have all, when invited to

someone's home for dinner, presented a bottle of wine to our hosts. And we've all had our feelings just a tiny bit bruised when they thanked us effusively, cooed over the selection and then whisked it into an oblivion from which it never, at least for the evening, emerged. Still, we're all a big boy and/or girl now, and we understand how our painstakingly chosen zinfandel (harsh, mean, redder than red, a bully) might be incompatible with the delicate, shy, sensitive entrée of poached...white thing. But how many times have we, after handing over the bottle, stayed for dinner, and indeed overnight, accompanied by a woman not our wife?

This was the situation I confronted when I played host to my drummer hero. When we met backstage after the show, he introduced me to a woman he'd met in Philadelphia; she had rendezvoused with him in California for the final leg of the tour. It was she who'd be joining us at our place for the next two nights. As for his actual, legal wife, she was back home in world-famous England.

Yes, I colluded with a near stranger in his commission of an act of extramarital criminality. But I would do it for Isaac Asimov, Danny Kaye and Julio Cortázar, one of whom I no longer read and two of whom are no longer alive. There will be those readers who condemn such an attitude, but in the end no ethical calculus can adequately refute the point that, really, if you can't help your heroes, mentors and show biz favorites score a little action on the side, whom *can* you help?

Besides, while virtue may be its own reward, vice takes care of you with a little something. It was from these two lovebirds, or sexbirds, or whatever they were, that I received the fine wine mentioned in the first paragraph. It accompanied the dinner I cooked the second night, an occasion complete in its perfection save only for the fact that my girlfriend (who disapproved of the whole scene) returned from work two hours late, leaving us to trade jokes and apologies while my lovingly prepared meal desiccated on the stove.

No wonder I missed the particulars of the label. Still, that vino had to come in at 20, 25 bucks a bottle, easy—a class house gift, from a class guy. Are you listening, Mr. Asimov? 

PLEASE PLEASE

ME

*What to buy—at Bergdorf's,
Macy's and Bloomingdale's—
for the man who has nothing*



It is the curse of the single person to be a perpetual witness to the splendors and privileges of matrimony. And among the amenities matrimony lavishes upon its participants, perhaps most galling to those of us who are confirmed bachelors or simply without partners is marriage's institutionalization of gift giving. I think of bridal-shower gifts, I think of wedding gifts, I think of anniversary gifts; I think, and then I shudder. For, although I do not begrudge a happy pair the perquisites of union, I cannot help but feel that my own dreary existence—an existence devoted largely to going home each night, putting on some plaintive honky-tonk music and then dancing with a mop—is the very type that would most benefit from an influx of bright and shiny objects. My married friends have both each other *and* a drawerful of sterling asparagus prongs. I have my work.

Oh, certainly, when at Christmastime family members hand me a Melitta or a biography of Rommel, they partly assuage this feeling of deprivation, but the effect is short-lived. So it was with joyous excitement that I learned about a program within Bloomingdale's bridal registry wherein single people can regis-

ter for gifts even if they are not getting married. Although self-registry is usually done in preparation for an upcoming birthday or anniversary, I decided that there is no reason why someone in my position shouldn't pick out merchandise simply because, as I would later tell salespeople, "I like to receive and unwrap presents."

I'm not particularly devoted to the Bloomingdale's style, so I checked to see if other stores had similar consolation-prize autoregistry programs. Employees at Saks Fifth Avenue and Alexander's told me their stores had neither bridal nor self-registries; a somewhat harried older woman at Lord & Taylor told me her store had discontinued its registry but did have a personal shopper who would walk around the store with customers and help them pick out things to buy.

"And then could I have other people buy them for me?," I asked.

"No, these are things that *you* would buy," she said.

"Oh," I said. "So there's no one here whom I can tell what merchandise I'm interested in having other people buy for me?"

"No," she said, her enthusiasm audibly diminishing.

"Could I tell *you* what merchandise I'm interested in having other people buy me?"

"No."

Chastened, I moved on. A saleswoman in Macy's bridal registry allowed me to register but seemed uncertain about the process. When I asked her if I should put my name in the space on the form marked GROOM or the one marked BRIDE, she stared at me as if her mind had suddenly and unexpectedly been transported to some very distant place. This prompted the woman who was standing behind me in line to suggest, "Why not put your name in both, like you're marrying yourself"—a comment discomfiting in the keenness of its perception. So I followed the woman's advice and moments later found myself racing through the store marking my selections on the form, fueled by the exciting possibilities of my burgeoning giftaganza: a microwave, an 11-piece cookware set, a 45-inch rear-projection TV, a Chinese vase.

Although no one had ever before

self-registered at Bergdorf Goodman, the head of the bridal registry was kind enough to get me special permission to do so. Because my selections at Macy's were primarily practical and needed, I decided that my Bergdorf's list should comprise objects distinguished by being both very expensive and very unappealing. This would be a good test of friendship, I reasoned; for only the most insecure of friends would buy me a pair of \$950 Staffordshire figurines in the shape of Saint Bernards or a \$3,000 Victorian coal scuttle.

Now I headed for Bloomingdale's. A kind woman in the bridal-registry department there gave me a standard registry form to fill out and told me to check the box on the form marked SELF. When I went off into the store to make my selections, I started to feel pangs of guilt about my indulgence at Bergdorf's, so I decided to try to work within a price range more appropriate to my friends' incomes. A no-nonsense New Yorky saleswoman in her late fifties took my form from me when I was finished walking through the store. She looked it over and became, in a word, *flapped*.

"Let me ask you something," she said to me, apparently noticing that I had signed up for only six items, none of them crockery. "Do you have *dishes*?"

I explained that I did. I asked her if they were a popular item in the Bloomingdale's registries.

"Well, it's..." She lost her train of thought. "One white plastic mug? You want someone to give you one plastic mug? I mean—don't you ever have any-one over?"

"Sometimes," I said, striving to remain personable and no more. "But I already have one mug, so I just need the one other."

She looked at me skeptically but let it pass.

"*Garfield underpants*?" she asked, referring to the cartoon-character-embossed briefs I had dawdled over only moments earlier. "You want someone to go into the boys department and —"

"Yes. I like them." I cut her off, anxious not to have the entire bridal-registry department brought up to speed on my taste in undergarments.

"*Potato chips*?" she asked, referring to my brief foray into the Bloomingdale's

UN-BRITISH CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

9. SE plus X's plus *lave* plus *s* (the head of *sap*), and the rest is definition.

12. A plus *p* (musically, *soft*) plus another *p* plus *ear* ("listener"), unto Ed. I personally feel that Ed, an unassuming character whom we often fall back on—take for granted, probably—in these puzzles, deserves such a visitor.

19. Did you hear about the dyslexic rabbi, who went around saying, "Yo"? It seems to me that I ought to be able to make up a dyslexic joke myself. Did you hear about the dyslexic president, who went around saying, "Read my lisp"? Well, I'll work on it.

23. The convention at which the Framers, as we call them, put together the U.S. Constitution was, of course, held in Philadelphia.

DOWN

1. Michael Dukakis actually cleaned up the rampant corruption in the Massachusetts state government. Bad politics. Bad economics, could be. Maybe what this country needs is decriminalized corruption. Then you could tax it. It might be objected that corruption makes out better on wars and big, ugly underutilized office buildings than it does on kinder, gentler things. The Republicans made a nice dollar out of public housing—but they also got caught at it, perhaps because public housing involves a lower class of crook, or because public-housing corruption is more of a Democratic area of expertise. At any rate, instead of raising public officials' salaries, why not give public officials a piece of the action? If the secretary of Housing and Urban Development were entitled to a certain fixed percentage of the moneys expended on housing projects, it wouldn't be such a sacrifice for him or her to approve a project for a community that was too poor or upright to grease his or her hand.

2. To veto is to *nix*. Plus *on*.

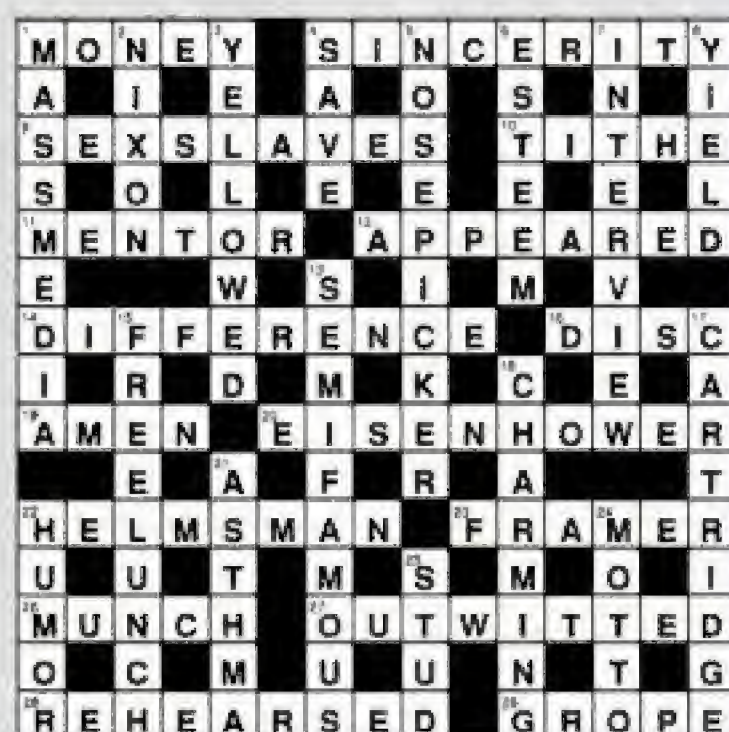
3. *Yellowed* is "showing age." *Dewey* coming up, in a down clue, is *yewed*, around *Ho*, which is *Ollie* (Colonel North) coming up ("rising") without *i.e.* (that is, *that is*).

7. Q&A is the definition. The spelling-out is

inert rearranged ("sort of"), plus *i.e.* (that is, again, *that is*) in VW.

15. Reference to "The Ladies Who Lunch," an at least semifamous song in Stephen Sondheim's *Company*. In William Safire's *Safire's Political Dictionary* (another example of the Republican domination of our time), Safire is able to trace the phrase "There is no such thing as a free lunch" back only so far as Republican Milton Friedman, who informs Safire that he has no idea where the phrase comes from. Free lunches were, of course, served in nineteenth-century saloons, and, of course, saloons' motives were no more charitable than are those of casinos that fly high rollers (generally speaking, big losers) in for free and comp their rooms and meals. Every transfer of goods or services is someone's investment. But if a person is unable to buy food, giving him a free lunch may well be a better taxpayers' investment than (a) leaving him to steal (and in the process perhaps to injure other people and destroy their property), then chasing him down and trying him and jailing him, or (b) leaving him to starve, then hospitalizing him and burying him at public expense. There is no such thing as free undernourishment, either. If the principle that there is no such thing as a free lunch has ever been flouted, it was during the supposedly conservative Reagan era, with its junk bonds, its speculation, its tax-code support for useless construction, its pie-in-the-sky notion of equity, its childish deferral of reckoning, its glorifying of the rich, its forgetting that rich people's money comes from the many small investments of people who aren't.

24. *Bottom* coming up without a head. Speaking of mottoes, Will Rogers said in 1935 about Republican presidents, "They only had one plan. It says, 'Now, boys, my head is turned; just get it while you can.'" ☺



deli. "What do they come in?"

"A bag," I explained.

"You think someone is going to buy you a *bag* of potato chips for \$1.25 and then have them sent to you?" This was clearly more than she could handle. "Let me ask you something—and, really, I'm not trying to give you a hard time here. But you've only signed up for six things. I'm sure you have more than six friends."

I nodded.

"Well, then, what is the *seventh* person going to buy?"

This seemed odd to me—first she had bullied me about my selections, and now she was contending that I hadn't made enough of them. She explained that my friends could come by in a week's time and punch up my selections on a computer.

Still uncertain as to whether the stores were just humoring me, I asked two friends to test them. Michael went to Bergdorf's to buy me a gift the following week. He expressed to the saleswoman who showed him the merchandise his surprise that my chosen objects could be quite so costly. When Michael said he had hoped to spend something in the neighborhood of \$20 on a gift, the saleswoman tried to offset any disappointment he might be feeling by explaining that *many* people who come to Bergdorf's can't afford the merchandise.

"I don't understand why he picked these things," a slightly confused Michael told the woman. "He..."

Laying her hand on Michael's arm in a sympathetic gesture, the saleswoman explained to her young customer, "*He obviously likes antiques.*"

Two days later my friend Erica presented me with the bag of potato chips from Bloomingdale's. I was touched by her thoughtfulness and said nothing about the absence of dip. Michael's efforts, Erica's results—I have been paid a tribute that until a few months ago I would never have imagined. I am witness to the breadth of my friends' affection for me and, through them, to the breadth of two New York department stores' affection for me. Although coupledom continues to elude me, and although I am in other ways still a pawn of the marriageocracy, I am less at odds with my solitude. I have my friends. I have my chips. ☺

PEER

REVIEW

*How to fix a jury —
the legal, pseudoscientific way!*

BY PATRICIA PEARSON



You're summoned for jury duty. You head down to the courthouse and join hundreds of fellow citizens who, like you, are at least faintly despondent over the prospect of spending days or weeks in a dreary government building doing nothing. You are interviewed by lawyers, who you assume are gauging your viability as a juror solely on the basis of your responses to their questions. What you do not know is that one of the people with your inquisitors is being paid \$125 an hour to scrutinize your facial hair, your wardrobe and the degree to which your pupils are dilated — and he's not even an attorney.

He's a jury consultant, whose job it is to examine prospective jurors and predict the types of verdicts they will deliver. His livelihood is made possible by a loophole of sorts in the jury-selection process, a provision that allows attorneys to dismiss a certain number of would-be jurors from a case without supplying any specific reasons to the court. In effect, the loophole enables trial lawyers to rig a trial legally; there's nothing wrong with knocking out a few prospectives who you think are likely to favor the other side.

And that's where jury consultants come in. Their methods sometimes smack of quackery — "There are *reasons* why men wear facial hair," says Dr.

James Rasicot, a successful Minneapolis consultant—but that's no obstacle to free-spending lawyers desperate for every teensy advantage they can muster on top of actually preparing for trial and studying the law.

"We look at somebody's total psychic [*sic*]—in other words, what they do 24 hours a day," Dr. Rasicot says. "Some individuals, when they're off [working] by themselves—they're kind of independent. And generally speaking, those are good on the defense. On the plaintiff's side, we're looking for people who involve themselves with other people all day long. So that's what occupation tells us."

But a potential juror's occupation is the obvious stuff, the tip of the iceberg. It's the physical characteristics—the *reasons why men wear facial hair*—that truly influence the verdict. (Facial hair, Rasicot says, is grown for three different reasons, none of them particularly flattering: "to cover up a physical or mental problem," "to express individuality or group identification"—whichever—or "to express aggression or machismo.") To assist lawyers in understanding the semiotics of juror grooming and fashion choices, Rasicot has published an authoritative text, *Winning Jury Trials*, which sells for \$69.95. The book comes complete with explanatory drawings ("2.01: BLOUSE POWER CONTINUUM: Straight Collar; Rounded Collar, Ornate Buttons; Frilly Collar and Lacey [*sic*] Front") and "Jury Color Combinations" charts, compiled on the basis of 600 random interviews on the subject of favorite color. According to these charts, a person who appears on a jury panel in a forest-green pullover is likely to decide in favor of a defendant in a lawsuit, because green-clad jurors award the "least amount of money." Jurors who wear blue tend to read "short stories, condensed novels, local newspapers [and] *Reader's Digest*"—and are therefore more inclined, by Rasicot's supposedly battle-tested reasoning, to convict than to acquit.

Considering the rather subjective character of Rasicot's theories, it's not surprising to learn that jury consultants often bitterly disagree with one another. Rasicot, for example, bristles when I mention Dr. Bruce Vaughn of Dallas, a

psychologist who evaluates jurors on the basis of body shape. Of Vaughn, who is developing a computer program that relates facial characteristics to personality traits—for example, the distance between a woman's nose and her lips provides information about her ego—Rasicot sniffs, "That whole theory was disproved years ago." Rasicot's own body of work is in turn pooh-poohed by Dr. Robert Gordon, an attorney-psychologist who works at the Wilmington Institute, a fancy Texas trial-consulting firm that has its own mock courtroom.

Gordon, who dismisses Rasicot's color-combinations charts as "superficial," has forged a path all his own with wiggery, *Dr. Who*-ish scientific research. His galvanic-skin-response tests require his subjects to be hooked up to electronic equipment that, Gordon says, "measure[s] the change in the electrical potential of the skin... like biofeedback." He also monitors the dilation of his subjects' pupils as he interviews them. "The challenge from my perspective is to identify the unconscious determinants," he says. "We conduct the [pupil and skin] studies to research participants' responses to various issues. This lets us know the emotionally laden aspects of the case." Suppose Gordon were commissioned to consult for the attorneys for homicidal family man John List. He would hire a control group of individuals, hook them up to his skin-response machines and bombard them with case-related facts and issues. If, say, a white, middle-class saleswoman emitted strong electric currents in response to the testimony "Mother was shot from behind," while a well-off, German-born man remained unmoved by the same testimony, Gordon would record their responses and extrapolate them onto prospective jurors with matching demographic makeup. "By connecting it with demographics," Gordon says, "it gives us some idea of how people respond to issues and at what levels."

Gordon's pièce de résistance is his new artificial-intelligence program, which he has already proclaimed "the next frontier," placing it in direct competition with Dr. Vaughn's face-reading computer program. Ideally, attorneys



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will be able to take Gordon's setup right into the courtroom, where they'll scan the jurors sitting in the pews, punch their physical characteristics and demographic profiles into the keyboard and *voilà!* — instant verdict prediction. The program contains juror types galore, all of them cross-referenced according to the jury-selection choices of legendarily successful American trial lawyers. "You could have Earl Rogers, Clarence Darrow, Racehorse Haynes," says Gordon, "—all of their decision-making about which jurors to select for which cases!"

Like Gordon, Gary Fleishman is a trial consultant — make that "performance-efficiency consultant" — who wants his clients to take his wares into the courtroom. Fleishman works at The Evidence Store, a retail outlet near Jersey City that supplies lawyers with visual aids for trials — crime-scene photos, color-coded charts, plastic models of broken bones and herniated disks, and so on. He prides himself on the completeness of the package he offers: you get The Evidence Store's fake skeletons, and you get Gary Fleishman's jury-selection advice, as filtered through his interpretation of right-brain/left-brain theory. How all this works, exactly, is hard to pin down; Fleishman's speech is larded with Al Haig-isms, with talk of "phonastetris-tics" and "plugging in portfolios." I asked him if he teaches his clients to distinguish right-brain-dominant from left-brain-dominant jurors. "The format of the portfolio," he said, "is automatically structured to encompass all different types of people. What we do in the consultation is a focusing, but the process becomes unconscious." Of his full-service trial-consulting package he says, "It's not my regulation to tell a client when they should bunt or not bunt. If they give me a scenario of what happened, and then I take all the information available, then I take my expertise and focus on parts of their performance. Which is mixed with some real technical aspects too. Visuals, color and the different modalities that one can use in order to, uh, perform."

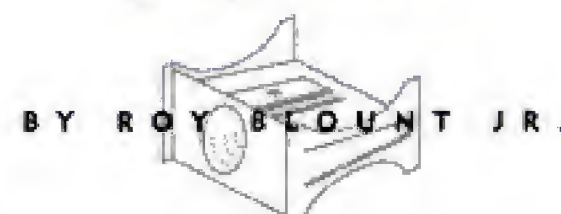
We have Gary Fleishman and his peers to thank for making the American legal system, already murky and Byzantine, a little more so. ☛

ELEPHANT IN

DISARRAY?

We need some kind of

party animal



For all I know, the New World Order will prevail, George Bush will modestly turn down the chance to be emperor

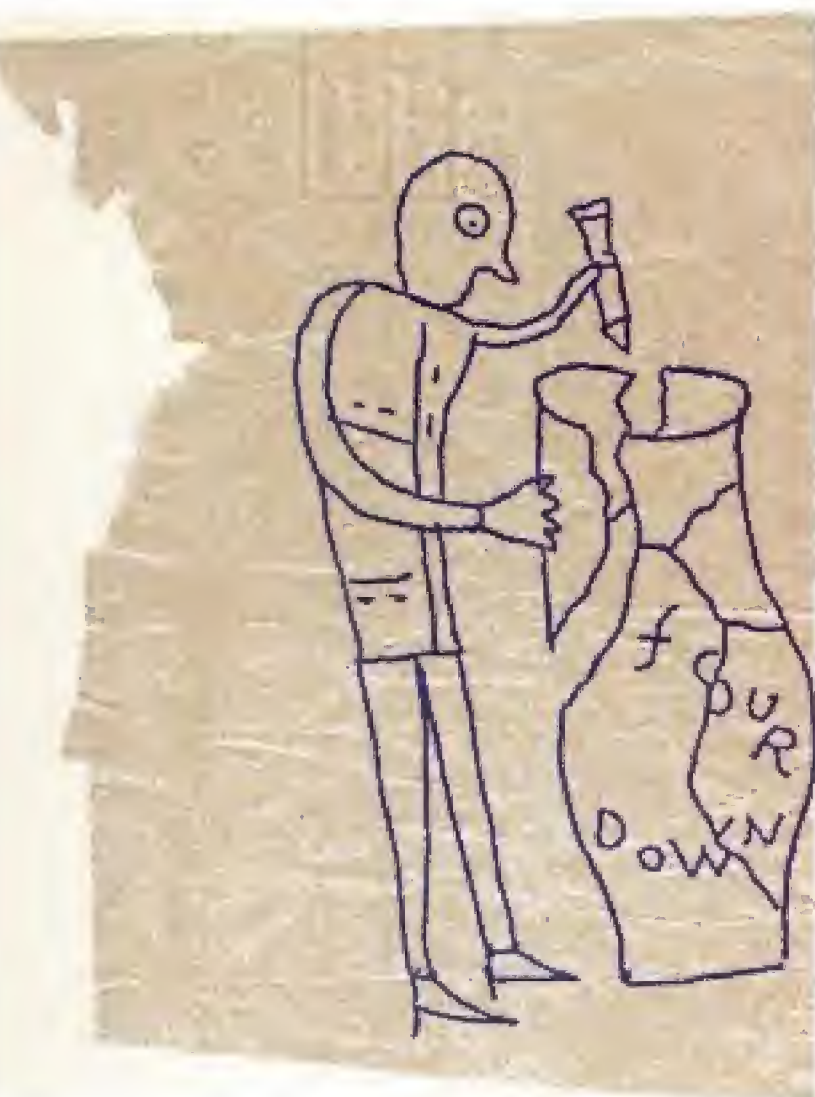
of EBCAY (Everything But Cuba, Albania and Yemen), it will be revealed that somebody forgot to carry a couple

of zeros back in 1983 and actually the federal government has been piling up enough of a surplus to straighten out all the banks and give every American a third VCR, the Bushes' dog will make a hip yet uncannily wholesome video with Madonna, and the Democrats will nominate narrow-faced senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska and Sam Nunn without realizing that this means their chances are Slim and Nunn.

As the 1990s unfold, though, the GOP no longer looks like the A-list party. Its right wing is sulking, its standard-bearer reminds people of a ganglier Herbert Hoover, and the fact that there are black Republicans seems finally to have been explained by the theory that they joined the Bush administration in order to bring it down from within by stating awkward truths: Assistant Secretary of Education Michael Williams announcing that current GOP logic made college scholarships designated for minority groups illegal; Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan insisting that his department could not function with a reduced budget; General Calvin Waller

(one assumes generals are Republicans) declaring the Desert Shield troops weren't ready to fight yet when the president was saying they were.

We may recall, also, that it didn't help the GOP's image when William Bennett backed out on the party's national chairmanship because he hadn't taken a vow of poverty and the job would pay only \$125,000 a year. This set the poverty level dangerously high in a slumping economy. (Bennett cited ethical considerations. "God knows what we ate for breakfast as children," his older brother, Robert, said, "but ethics has always been very important in our family." If he'd taken the party post, ethical considerations would have prevented his accepting the \$700,000 a year he expects to get for making speeches about returning to bedrock values. So he turned down the job that involved ethical considerations.)



Don't Republicans begin to seem less and less representative of bedrock values when consumers cut back to buying only those things they need?

So. Can the Democrats take over the White House and put jollity back into our polity? Well, they run the Congress and New York.

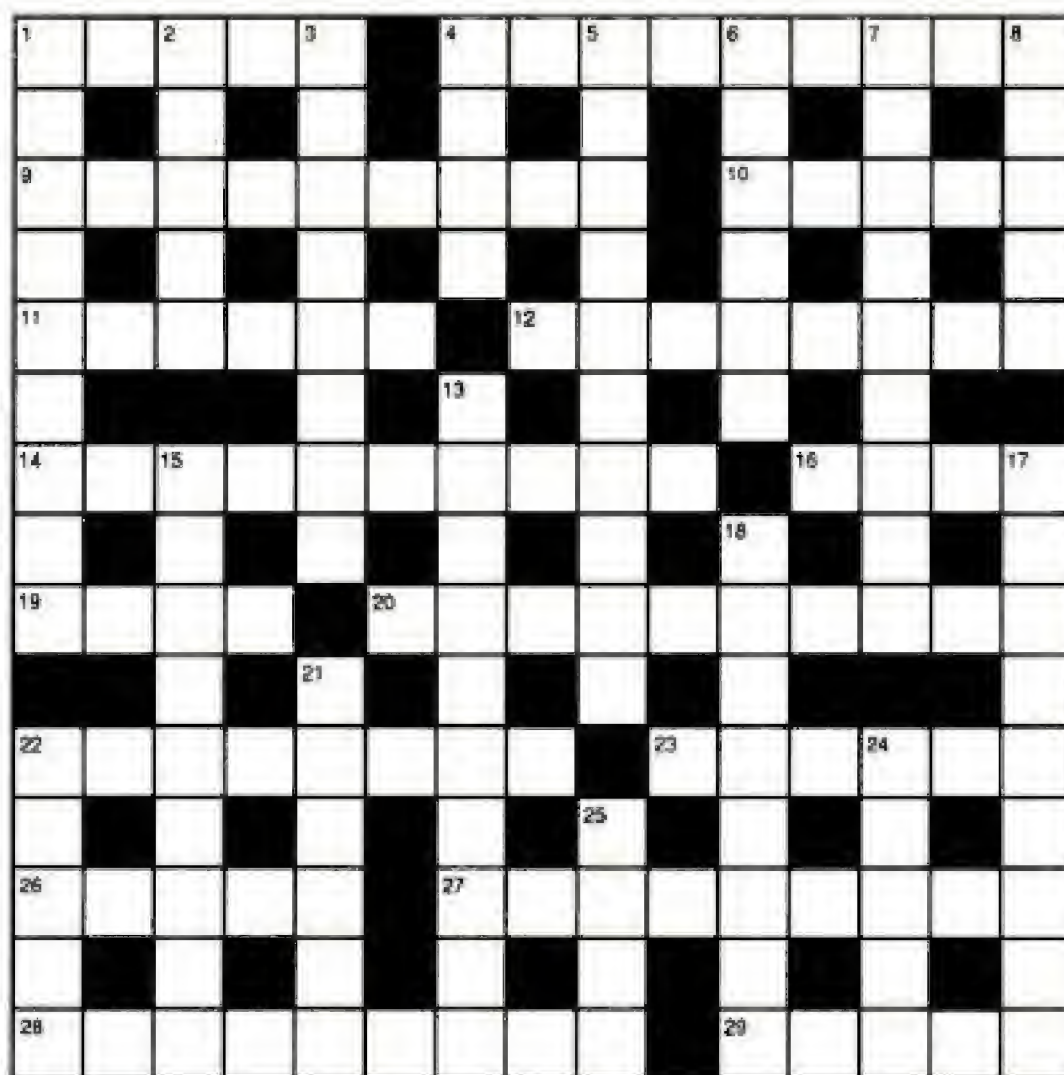
Forget I brought all this up. I'd rather

talk about 9 Across, the answer to which is *sex slaves*. I once met a man in a bar who claimed he'd once been drugged, kidnapped and held throughout initiation week in the attic of a sorority house at the University of Colorado. "It wasn't anything like you've probably imagined," he said. "They mostly just wanted to tell me about their days, and try on outfits and have me say how nice they looked. I felt used, but then again I didn't. They had me in a breechclout, like Indians, man. It was pretty hot, but. One of them was a cheerleader, and she tried to teach me some of her routines. But I said, 'You know, this is kind of embarrassing for me.' She said, 'Do you think I always feel like cheering? I don't even like anybody on our team. They think they're like these gods.' It was an interesting experience, but I wouldn't want to go through it again."

Undoubtedly this man was bullshitting me. But not in a political way. He spoke neither of victimization nor of conquest. He did not moralize, nor did he play to my prurience. He did not seem to have anything to prove.

Of course, he wasn't running for anything. Or running anything. (He said he was a pottery consultant.) And he spoke as an ex-sex slave. While incumbent, so to speak, he may have been as unpleasant to listen to as George Bush.

He did say this: "There were so many of them. And if I asked one of them if she'd help me get away, she'd say, 'Get away? I guess you don't like me as much as you do Diane.'"



ACROSS

1. My grasp of one Republican virtue... (5)
2. ...is (nice try!) shaky, in candor. (9)
9. Southeastern kisses bathe saphead? They're bound to do it! (3,6)
10. It is in the tenth part. (5)
11. Teacher implies "Women to left!" (6)
12. Unto Ed a soft, soft listener came forth. (8)
14. "I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the ____" — Robert Frost. (10)
16. Something circular and flat is in nation's capital. (4)
19. In dyslexic's name, an end to prayer. (4)
20. East is nowhere, strangely, for late GOP standard-bearer. (10)
22. Pilot a supporter of current GOP standard-setter. (8)
23. Old Philly conventioneer helps enable artist to hang. (6)
26. Chew crunchily on painter. (5)
27. Proved smarter than twit, due to confusion. (9)
28. Grim conveyance wrapped in scarlet went through. (9)
29. Feel for GOP, er... somehow. (5)

DOWN

1. TV, newsweeklies, etc., present state that rejected Duke with a thousand? Odd idea. (4,5)
2. Veto on 20's Quayle. (5)
3. Dewey comes up around rising Col. North — without, that is, showing age. (8)
4. Rescue smashed vase. (4)
5. Knows (we hear) one who chooses — he searches pointedly for something he senses within. (4,6)
6. Energy meets up with respect. (6)
7. Q&A sort of inert, that is, in Volkswagen. (9)
8. Give up and return. (5)
13. Somewhat well-known mime/oaf's weird to us. (10)
15. Liberate what ladies in *Company* do? No such thing! (4,5)
17. Market vehicle on crest — it's loaded! (9)
18. Cold, hurting and beguiling. (8)
21. Math's a mess when you have trouble breathing. (6)
22. Make possibly tuneful sound or jokes. (5)
24. Headless ass comes up with words to live by. (5)
25. Breeding buck could turn to dust. (4)

Answers appear on page 72.

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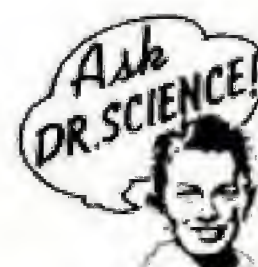
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PARTY POOP

Half-mad gossipist Liz Smith, knowing the precariousness of her future with the *Daily News*, prepares a fulsome, lipstickky greeting for *New York Post* editor Jerry Nachman.

Champion name-dropper and celebrity photographer Jill Krentz shows off her new south-of-the-border-by-way-of-a-golf-course-in-the-Ukraine look at a performance of *Jackie Mason: Brand New* on Broadway.



SAFE AT ANY SPEED Former feminist Gloria Steinem makes goo-goo eyes at fellow do-goodnik-seventies artifact Ralph Nader at the New York Hilton.



WEIGHT-WATCHING DOS AND DON'TS: HOW TO MAKE THE CAMERA WORK FOR YOU

Do pose next to someone or something larger and rounder than yourself, as (1) model Carol Alt and (2) almost-camp icon Ernest Borgnine have done. **Don't** invite comparisons with the way you looked on a good day ten years ago, the mistake of aged, cosmetologically obsessed showgirl Ann Miller (3). **Do** hide your figure flaws behind large, eye-catching objects: (4) Delta Burke hides out behind an oversize armload of roses, and (5) Andrew Dice Clay adds angles to a chubby face with dramatic, gashlike sideburns. **Don't** draw attention to your thickened middle by allowing demented gossip columnists to span your waist with their hands, as (6) Bess Myerson does here. **Don't** (like Donald Trump's former date and *Penthouse* pet Sandi Korn, 7) wear sleeves that make your arms look like hams, even if that's the way deadbeat short-fingered vulgarians prefer them.

MORE

PARTY

POOP



DOES HE ALSO DO LIZA AND MARILYN AND CAROL CHANNING?

At a dinner-dance at The Plaza for Casita Maria, a settlement house for Hispanic families, manly Pat Buckley managed to kick up her heels and tango despite the fact that she was wearing a tube dress so tight it caused an alluring wattle of skin to protrude like a lip from her shoulder blade.



I WANT YOUR STUBBLE

Frank Sinatra took his admiration for 27-year-old multimillionaire George Michael to another level recently. Not only did Sinatra address Michael, in a

letter released to the press, as "top dog on the top rung of a tall ladder called Stardom," but now he's taken to imitating the former Wham! pinup boy's four-day beard growth.

After removing various items of restrictive formal clothing, really famous artist Julian Schnabel sticks a



finger in his ear, the better to block out the high-pitched whine of pop star Paul Simon at a party for the New York City Ballet.



NIGHT OF 1,000 SURVIVORS

One highlight of the 80th-birthday party that second-tier *New York Post* gossip columnist Cindy Adams threw for her husband, Joey, the third-tier *New York Post* humor columnist, was when Cindy got up and told the



crowd about how she *always* contacts her dear and well-connected friend (and one of that evening's guests) Senator Alfonse D'Amato when she's "in trouble" while traveling: "We had difficulty in Africa—with *apologies to His Excellency the mayor*—and it was Senator D'Amato to our rescue." But the biggest thrill for Joey was surely the photographers who buzzed around him all night long, taking pictures of him—*Joey Adams!*—nuzzling up to all the famous and glamorous people usually depicted in his wife's column. *Above right*, the birthday boy (in the polka-dot tie) poses with guests Marla Maples and Donald "Stinky" Trump.



Trump may have been the punch line of most of the jokes told by the swarm of aging, bad comedians (from Henny Youngman to Orson Bean) at the party ("Marla, you picked a loser!" said Pat Cooper), but his short fingers were as limber and active as ever. Even top mistress Marla got in on the act, only she pointed with a manicured thumb, and what she pointed at was her plunging neckline.



DOWNTIME OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS What do stars look like on their own time, when they're doing without the services of hair, wardrobe and makeup professionals? Here's what some celebrities wear on airplanes: (1) hateful rap superstar Vanilla Ice, never one to miss an opportunity to expose potential record buyers to his charm, deplaned recently at Los Angeles International Airport toting a piece of carry-on luggage that did not fit beneath his seat or in an overhead compartment; (2) Steve Allen, who passes for an intellectual in southern California, arrived from New York wearing what he must imagine is an East Coast, Ivy League, tweedy, Woosterish look; (3) lemonade pitch-



1

2

3

woman Linda Evans, also photographed at LAX, demonstrates that while the laws of gerontology and gravity, respectively, may not hold on the set of *I'll Take Romance*, they do indeed operate the rest of the time.

CHECKING IN ON JESSICA HAHN It has been four years since she became famous, and just look at what classy, glamorous and sophisticated people the former church secretary gets to hang around with now!

Standing with Condé Nast generalissimo Alexander Liberman at an exhibition of his paintings, *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour squints painfully at the bright light of evening, having removed her sunglasses for perhaps the first time in 1991.



Above left, Jeremy Irons, who, like Culkin, was nominated for a best-actor award, wore sneakers, Woody-style. Kooky!

At the Golden Globe Awards, which unaccountably are attended by many more important and serious entertainers than are the Academy Awards, ten-year-old Macaulay Culkin makes the face he is destined to make his entire life whenever he is in the vicinity of a photographer.



GANGWAY! At an American Foundation for AIDS Research dinner at the Waldorf, a bodyguard clears a path for Elizabeth Taylor's bosom as she makes her way to the buffet table.



NOT TESTED ON ANIMALS...BUT, PRESUMABLY, ON SCARY WOMEN WITH HAIR EXTENSIONS Only-in-L.A. local-television concoction Elvira thinks this is a good way to get people to buy a new cruelty-free fragrance called Evil.

Oval Office Diary

Notes Toward a Nonfiction Novel

TRANSCRIPTION OF GHWB DICTAPHONE RECORDING 001-0291

Tell ya, know why I married Bar. If you'd said to me, back in 1945, that we--that in 46 years I was gonna be president, wartime one, big, big national effort--I mean, Tension City: The Sequel--and that Bar, first lady now, was gonna go out to some mountainside with some Austrian movie star named Arnold and sit down on some . . . some lunch tray thing and go skidding off on some ice--and break her leg on a tree--and I'm trying to think about missiles--wouldn't have said, "I do." Woulda said, "Darn right I do." Gotta love her. Hey, Bar--I gotta talk to Gorbachev soon, important, about what the heck's with Lithuania. Maybe a good time for you to try a little bungee jumping?

Now, this entry--a little more historical than most. Not boasting. Just is. Now, these little notes that I wrote to myself--on pads and scraps, that are here or there on my desk and in my drawers with the pens and the little black Swiss army knife with the scissors spring that I always play with, and the pork rinds--gotta clean that drawer out--the notes that I have, and that I wrote before the war widened out, gonna read them now on the Dictaphone and then send the scraps to the Smithsonian. For history.

Before I read--wanna just say that I tried to handle it right. Checked with Congress. Got Marlin to try to get those wacko media people out of Baghdad. Called Tom Foley right away about the attack. (And he's shopping. Can't reach him, out shopping at Brooks Brothers. Ought to order from Bean, maybe manage somehow to be near a phone on the eve of war. Heck with it.)

I even remembered and made sure Danny had something to do. The map we gave him looked just like the real one in the Sit Room--even Marilyn couldn't tell--and he's been moving the little pushpin flags around. Jimmy's neat idea. Think he was acting in one of his unificatory moods. A little embarrassing when General Powell wanted to show us some deployments and it turned out Dan had taken the stuff home and left the 82nd Airborne over there in his--in the playroom, and brought in by mistake a bag full of his kid's World Wrestling Federation figures instead. Made do, though.

Okay--my little pile of notes. First one: "Emph. to public re early euphoria: This is not Panama, not Grenada, not L.A. Olympics." And not Vietnam either, didn't forget that.

Here's another, a list. They're all crossed out, but I can read 'em: "Operation Desert Breeze? Desert Wind? Operation Just Deserts? Desert Spear? Operation Flying Horseshoe of Death?" Finally just let Powell have his way.

One I don't get: "Hollywood Huddleston." Who the heck is that? Says "Hollywood, Walter, J.P. and Jackie." These the people in that 227 show Bar watches before Golden Girls? Doesn't look like my handwriting anyway.

Here's one that's pretty darn clear: "Aziz--S.O.B.!!" Not taking my letter from Jimmy--"Language incompatible in correspondence of heads of state," blah, blah, whatever he said. That he found that rude. Tell you what's rude: not writing back. Saddam. Always a little note--means so much.

Better stop. Gotta reassure the nation again. And I will--I will do something about those pork rinds. Bar gave me a deadline, and she'll be in here like a Wild Weasel if I don't comply.

GHWB: gk

February 1991

TAME YOURSELF

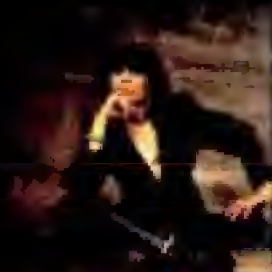
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